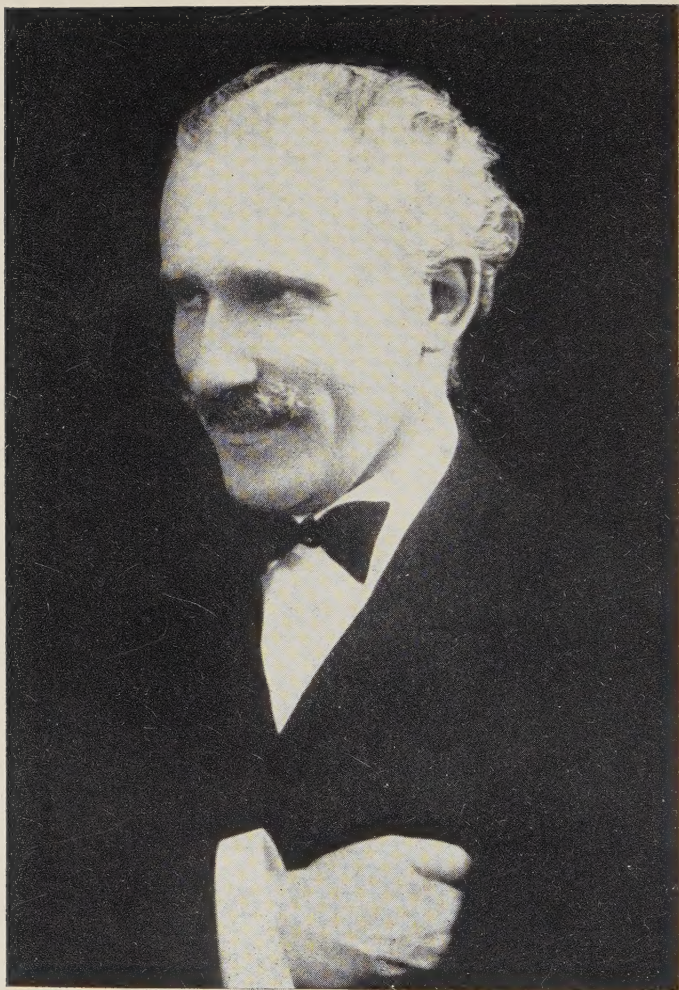


Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2022 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

ARTURO TOSCANINI





ARTURO TOSCANINI

*Courtesy of The Philharmonic-Symphony Society
of New York*

ARTURO TOSCANINI

BY *TOBIA NICOTRA*

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN BY
IRMA BRANDEIS AND H. D. KAHN

THE CINCINNATI BIBLE SEMINARY
LIBRARY



THE SUN DIAL PRESS, INC.
New York

COPYRIGHT 1929 BY ALFRED A. KNOPF, INC.

785.092
T713n
1929

MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
CL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 . FORESHADOWINGS	3
2 . THE CONDUCTOR ORDAINED	17
3 . THE MEMORY PHENOMENON	31
4 . THE DIONYSIAC	42
5 . EARLY CONCERTS AND OPERA	66
6 . MORE CONCERTS AND <i>TALKS ON MUSIC</i>	77
7 . TOSCANINI AT THE SCALA	96
8 . NEW YORK, 1908, TO NEW YORK, 1920	111
9 . THE NEW SCALA	139
10 . OPERA	152
11 . FURTHER OPERATIC ACTIVITY	169
12 . MORE SYMPHONY CONCERTS	199
APPENDIX	227

ARTURO TOSCANINI



FORESHADOWINGS

ARTURO TOSCANINI

CHAPTER ONE

Foreshadowings

THE CITY OF PARMA IS ENTITLED TO A CERTAIN PRIDE and prestige; for it has never, within record or memory, belied its reputation as an inexhaustible fountain-head of musicians in general, and orchestra-members in particular. If you listen for it—as any Italian will tell you—you can hear the characteristic Parmesan dialect in some portion of every native

orchestra, and most foreign ones. Nor is that all; for this city, which is still the most fertile source of musicians in Italy, can also claim supremacy in supplying, and having long supplied, praiseworthy leaders to the world's music-armies. Among these the outstanding, the foremost, is Arturo Toscanini.

Toscanini was born in Parma, Emilia, on the 25th of March 1867; son of Claudio Toscanini and Paula Montani. In 1876 he registered in the conservatory of his native city as a non-resident student and attended Professor Griffini's solfeggio classes. In 1878, when he was admitted as a resident, he entered Professor Carini's 'cello class and at the same time began studying counterpoint and composition under Giusto Dacci. He was graduated in 1885 with diplomas in 'cello and composition. Out of a possible 160 points in the former, he had made 160; out of a possible 50 in the latter, 50. In reward of this proficiency they accorded him the *lode distinta*, or honorary recognition of merit.

Toscanini's father had been a soldier under Garibaldi, and although the military life had left no room for the life of culture, yet he was an intelligent

man, and his warmth of spirit held at least a suggestion of the artistic temperament. Among Toscanini's other relatives there had never been any marked leanings towards art, except in one—a sister who had shown unmistakable talent in painting. As for the musical inclination, it had its origin in this boy. But it cannot be claimed that Arturo Toscanini as a child gave any indication of the musical prodigy to come. It was the innate Parmesan love of music, and no foreshadowing of the future, which had sent him to the conservatory; and his modest hope had been (like that of most of his fellow students) eventually to establish himself as a musician in somebody else's orchestra. But once he had begun to study music, his gifts were quick to develop. His intelligence and ability immediately distinguished him among his school-mates, and in the examinations for his two diplomas he came out at the top of his class, with perfect grades.

Emilia's reputation as an extremely musical region is widespread in Italy. Whether by chance or not, it is a fact that Wagner—coming to hear Angelo Mariani conduct one of his works at the Comunale Opera-

house, on November 1, 1871—entered Italy through the gateway of Bologna. Rossini travelled from Pesaro to Bologna to study there under Father Mattei. And it was in Bologna, under the directorship of Giambattista Martini, that that Musical Academy was founded to which Mozart applied for membership when he visited Italy in 1770. In Bologna it is not in the least unusual to see peasants and labourers, on their return from work, stop in the main square to listen to a snatch of Berlioz, or one of Wagner's preludes, played by the town band. The city opera-house there is looked upon as a sort of torture chamber through which every artist is obliged to pass before he may legitimately enjoy the thrills of victory. Those who can escape the censure and win the approval of the Bologna opera-goers truly deserve to be called victors.

Parma, which is Bologna's nearest neighbour-city, lies very close to the town of Busseto—birth-place of Giuseppe Verdi. It is just possible that the people of Parma are unwittingly influenced by their near kinship with Italy's greatest operatic composer. Being so close to Busseto (which, although not much

more than a village, is monumental for its associations), it may be that Parma has caught up the current of genius and so kept the feeling for music alive in the hearts of its simple people, handing it on from father to son, in faithful succession.

As for Toscanini, it is well known what great enthusiasm he felt for his celebrated neighbour, and how many times, alone and unannounced, he visited the birthplace and home of the "Swan of Busseto." Everyone knows with what reverent love he supervised and conducted a performance of *Falstaff* in the tiny theatre of that distinguished village, to commemorate the centenary of Verdi's birth and the twenty-fifth anniversary of his death. There is sufficient power in a devoted memory and regard for an illustrious man to stir deeply and even alter the human soul; and Verdi's influence on Toscanini has never yet been abated.

The large majority of young persons with any degree of exceptional musical talent make up their minds at the first opportunity that they must become composers. Not so Toscanini. For him Verdi had set a standard below which he could never have

found his own music worthy; but he realized well how far above the average, on what an almost unscaleable eminence, the composer of *Rigoletto* stood. The *lode distinta* that he had won along with his diploma had not infected him with the common itch to produce a steady flow of musical compositions, from which so few young students are immune. Toscanini was convinced that no one ought to write unless he had something to say which had never before been said. He did, none the less, make a few early attempts at composition; and when the orchestra of Parma—in which the undergraduate Toscanini played the 'cello—went to Turin in 1884 to take part in the Exposition concerts, he entered into negotiations with the editors Giudici and Strada, and a few of his compositions were accepted and published. Below is the fullest accessible list of his publications:

Berceuse, for piano.

Canto di Mignon, for soprano; with piano accompaniment. Words by Antonio Ghislanzoni.

Desolazione, song, with piano accompaniment.

Sono Gelosa, song with piano accompaniment.

Words by Rocco Pagliara.

V'Amo, song with piano accompaniment. Words by Heine.

During the same Exposition period (in 1884), the Lucca publishing house of Milan issued the following songs by Toscanini:

Neurosi, for soprano; with piano accompaniment. Words by Rocco Pagliara.

Autunno, song for soprano; with piano accompaniment. Words by Felice Cavallotti.

This list includes all his published compositions, and, unless I am mistaken, there are none unpublished. But it must be noted that in their matchless comprehension Toscanini's readings of music themselves border on creation and provide him an æsthetic satisfaction almost identical with the composer's. The greatest writers of music have always passed through a primary phase of reverence for the great works of other composers, before they themselves began producing masterpieces. There is a real influence to be taken into account here, for when one is really stirred by the beauties of a composition, he is almost

sure to be pricked by the desire to write one of the kind himself—less for the sake of rising to the composer's rank than in order to experience emotions which, since more personal, will presumably also be deeper. It was after hearing Verdi's *Aida* that Puccini began to compose. Berlioz, who had the greatest imaginable love for art, was so moved by the tenderness and grandeur of the *adagio* from Beethoven's Symphony in B flat that he wrote in his *Lettres intimes*:

“J’ai pleuré toutes les larmes de mon âme en écoutant ses sourires sonores, comme les anges seuls en doivent laisser rayonner. Croyez-moi, cher ami, l’être qui écrivait une telle merveille d’inspiration n’était pas un homme. L’Archange Michel chante ainsi quand il rêve en contemplant le monde, debout au seuil de l’Empyrée. Oh, n’y pouvoir tenir là, sous ma main, une orchestre et me chanter ce poème archangelique. . . .”

For Toscanini it was enough to have an orchestra from which to draw the kind of poetry Berlioz describes, repeating, expounding, and enriching the

patterns he saw in the great masterpieces. His approach is always delicately adjusted. He avoids the impassioned attitude because passion is too often exclusive. Ordinarily it precludes an unprejudiced view of beauty; it interferes with the normal power of balanced response to the æsthetic appeal. Passion does not argue—it determines and dictates. It rarely reasons or deliberates—wherefore composers are often the poorest judges in musical matters. But Toscanini is above all a critic—a critic with high analytic powers—and in that role it is urgent that he remain unhampered by passion.

If it be granted that the orchestra-leader is an intellectual performer, he must be essentially like the virtuoso. What is a virtuoso? In my opinion, he is a performer gifted with a special sort of genius made up of intellectual and spiritual (but chiefly spiritual) qualities. He is an interpreter, but an interpreter who brings his own individuality into the recital of the composer's ideas; for this reason general intelligence and definite analytic ability must both be present. Intelligence, because the unity of any frag-

ment of music is derived in part from the general colour informing the whole, and this colour he must be able to recognize and transcribe.

A work of music is like a statue at the instant when the quarrier turns the marble over to the sculptor. Life must be breathed into the stone; and in the animating process, where music is concerned, it is not enough to recognize, by means of his written notations, the sound-images moulded and fixed by the composer. There is more to be done: one must find and re-create in himself the spiritual, or rather the imaginative, attitude that must have been the composer's when with inward ear he listened to the inward singing. That attitude is involved. It might be compared to a path which, to reach the summit of a mountain, traces an infinite number of curves without altering the main direction. A careful analysis follows all the caprices of these curves without losing sight of the dominating directive line.

The orchestra-conductor must be more than a virtuoso. He must know how to communicate his experience, his meanings, his emotional response, to a hundred performers. With this the case, the question

becomes still further complicated. For if the performer (virtuoso or orchestra-leader) draws his special gifts from an entirely intimate and inward source, it must mean that he owes more to nature than to time, or, in other words, more to instinct than to education and learning. It was apropos of this that Wagner said no one who had not been born a conductor—unless, by chance, a born musician—could ever become a conductor.

Toscanini's genius lies in his ability to give the just, the precise, stress to every phrase; to read the melodic line eloquently and correctly; to set in relief the idea that was meant by the composer to occupy the foreground—the idea upon which the accent of the whole composition was intended to fall. And not all the adroitness-drawn-from-experience in the world could be substituted for these. He is proved by the rightness of his phrasing, just as a singer or an actor is proved by the particular colouring he gives his reading. Thus the orchestra-leader does not have to be a composer so long as he understands the art of composition. Nor is it necessary that he be a virtuoso in the narrow sense of the word. Berlioz and Wagner,

among the greatest conductors of their times, were something less than second-rate pianists. For the leader the first and last essential is that he be a musician. After all, the orchestra is his instrument, and if he is to play it well, he must know all the keys. From such a point of view Arturo Toscanini is the ideal conductor. Not only is he a musician to the marrow, but he knows individually every instrument in his orchestra and can play each. Nothing escapes his eye. On the rostrum the simplicity and commanding clarity of his gestures are immensely impressive. He dictates the rhythm with a special play of combined power and delicacy. The influence he exerts on his musicians is so much the more direct in that the leader's eye is never diverted from his players by the presence of a score; Toscanini has *all* his notes by memory. He directs with glance and gesture. Behold in him Wagner's "born musician."

As conductor he has no master—or, rather, his masters are the composers in whose service all his intelligence and ability are at work. He performs constant miracles of intelligence; and yet not *by means of*

intelligence. Spirit, rather. He listens and comprehends; and each successive hearing is a new revelation for him. He is hardly conscious of what he so sees, but the vision is there and the transcription follows. More than a proof of intelligence, his work is a play of insight and sympathy. His interpretations are a synthetic commentary. He has hardly ever permitted himself to add or change the slightest shade of meaning in a work performed under his direction. What strokes of his own he has added have been such as he could not doubt the composers themselves would have approved. He clarifies the writer's ideas and at the same time deepens them—it is in this that he makes his own name inseparable from the composer's. It is to be recalled, apropos, that after the première of the *Fanciulla del West* at the Metropolitan in New York, Puccini spoke of Toscanini as the *second author* of his opera. Exactly. Puccini and Toscanini shared one another, and shared the performance. But the former, after a single dismal attempt to conduct his *La Bohème*, was forced to give up the baton. This leads to the reflection that, when they are combined in one per-

ARTURO TOSCANINI

son, the composer is bound to overthrow the conductor; and that in order to be a first-rate conductor it is not merely unnecessary to be a composer, but possibly even essential *not* to be one.

CHAPTER TWO

The Conductor Ordained

TOLSTOY, IN HIS *WHAT IS ART*, TELLS THE FOLLOWING story of the Russian artist Brulov: One day in correcting a sketch made by one of his pupils he added a stroke or two with his own brush and immediately put the breath of life into what had been a very mediocre piece of work. "But my sketch is entirely changed," exclaimed the pupil, "and all you've done is to add a few strokes to it!" "The reason for that," answered Brulov, "is that art entered the thing just where those strokes began."

The anecdote may be happily applied to the conservatories and academies of music. I do not mean to deny that there are a few real artists among music teachers. But in general the conservatory is an altar on which enthusiasm is quietly extinguished and the sacred flame of art only scantily nourished. If the teacher himself is lacking, who can be called in to develop the creative instinct? Tolstoy in the same discussion says that, thanks to the conservatories, musical performance grows steadily more mechanical and automatic. If execution is to be artistic—that is, if it is to convey the composer's emotion—it must be accurate to the point of perfection. The transmission of musical emotion, although it seems so absolutely simple, is in reality accomplished only by the performer who can capture the infinitely delicate, indefinable nuance that makes perfection. No one captures it who does not profoundly feel the music—putting himself in direct contact with it. There is no machine that can take the dancer's place; a photographer cannot do the work of a painter, a phonograph never duplicates the singer's notes, nor can a rhetorician speak for a poet. Schools can teach what

is needed for the production of something analogous to art—but art itself, never. The instruction in schools is limited to technical matters, and stops where the nuance that Tolstoy describes begins—which is to say, where art begins.

When he left the conservatory, Toscanini was not yet fully aware of either his temperament or his real calling. Like most of his school-mates he at once began a pilgrimage from theatre to theatre throughout both hemispheres playing the 'cello. He was then eighteen years old and had completed a full nine years of study. Describe him in terms of ingenuity and lack of experience. But who had there been at the conservatory to sharpen his powers of observation? We can only guess how much latent musical ability and comprehension he must have possessed even then. Let us acknowledge, however, that they had given him his first chance. For on the 25th of May 1884, at the age of seventeen, he had led the student orchestra at the conservatory in a composition of his own—an *Andante* and a *Scherzo*, written as required classwork. It had been his debut at the baton. But it is hardly likely that anyone, on that occasion, recog-

nized the special gifts of the great future conductor.

And so, in the spring of 1886, he found himself in Rio de Janeiro, South America. Scarcely nineteen years old, he was modestly enrolled as a 'cellist in an opera-company orchestra led by Leopoldo di Miguez, a Brazilian of Rio. This Miguez was plainly no genius, and the musicians, who saw through him at once, took free rein and treated him very much as they pleased. They were almost all Italians. The opera company (which included the tenor Fiñez, the basso Roveri, and Mmes Boulitchov and Lei) was also Italian. Aristide Venturi, the chorus-master, was Italian; and the concert-master (in those days his function was distinct from that of conductor) was an Italian, Superti by name.

Although his dignity had been seriously offended, Miguez made no protest during the two months spent by the company at San Paulo. But once they reached Rio, where he was at home, he published a scathing letter denouncing the disloyalty the Italians had shown him, and announced his resignation from the conductorship. The opera for the first night was *Aida*. The impresario tore his hair. Who

was to deliver him, now, from the inevitable shipwreck of all his productions and the stranding of his company in the gutter? Were the poor creatures to be cut off suddenly from all resources and left empty-pocketed, as far as possible from home? For the moment, at least, there was nothing to forewarn them of the hurricane heading their way; the box-office receipts had been excellent.

In the evening the public poured into the theatre in a body, overjoyed at the all too rare opportunity of hearing an opera. But no sooner had Maestro Superti presented himself in Miguez's place than there was a burst of anger. Somewhere in the theatre people began to hiss. The hissing grew to a shout; and presently the whole audience, which had been holding back as long as possible, broke out in howls of indignation. The overture was summarily stopped at the entrance of the first violins. Terror-stricken, red in the face, the director hurried from the platform. Having been put to flight himself, there was nothing for it but to fling himself at Venturi's feet; and the whole cast surrounded the chorus-master in entreaty. *He* must go out there in front; *he* must conduct the music;

he must save whatever was still left to be saved.

Aristide Venturi opened the door a crack and took a step towards the stage. He got no farther; the audience, bellowing with rage, returned him deftly whence he had come.

It was at that moment that the musicians of the orchestra acted. They knew that their nineteen-year-old 'cellist had extraordinary talents; they divined the "born conductor." And when Toscanini seemed reluctant, they came forward and deposited him on the rostrum by main force.

The sudden appearance of this boy and the utter novelty of the situation caught the audience. Their curiosity was pricked, and silence descended as though by sorcery. An impressive silence—after that earlier hubbub. But was the audience really appeased or was this merely a pause for astonishment before a worse uproar?

There stands young Toscanini on the conductor's dais wearing somebody else's dress coat—which they have got him inside of without his being aware of it—holding a baton someone has managed to thrust between his fingers. He closes the score (for he is

never during his whole career to conduct except by memory), lifts his baton, sends the familiar electric glance to left and right, and gives the signal for attack. The prelude begins. Self-pledged, the orchestra makes its most heroic efforts to second this conductor in whose hands the fate of their season may possibly be saved.

The opera closes; there is a delirium of applause. Disaster had been averted for the company; and Toscanini's ordination in the conductorship, accomplished by the luck that had put him on the rostrum at the crucial moment, was attended by a tumult of praise. The season continued without break in success, and the youthful leader arranged and directed eighteen operas during the company's tour. Luck had done better than the conservatory. Toscanini's fellow musicians had recognized intuitively qualities his teachers had overlooked. He had had to leave the school to find himself.

"We talk too much," says Wagner; "we listen too much—and we don't do enough looking."¹ Which indicates the worst fault of the schools and

¹ "*Wir reden zu viel, selbst auch hören zu viel, und sehen zu wenig.*"

academies. They teach us to read without thinking; they cram us with notions without suggesting that we might do well to meditate on ourselves—without ever revealing to us the essential “I.” Let it be noted in passing that the present-day lack of originality in art is closely related to that fault. A work of art is worthless if it contributes no new emotions to mankind, if it is limited to repeating what has already been said, if it loosens no new current, however small, in the human stream.

The artist is a person who has visual powers where others are blind. In other words, he is a highly receptive individual, sensitive to the most delicate gradations of feeling that can be suggested through the medium of his particular art. Now, music is a province where receptiveness varies greatly. Regret, hope, terror, anger, joy, faith, doubt, glory, love—these and more can be suggested. What we hear depends as much on our own capacity to receive impressions as on the temper of the music we listen to.

Toscanini has entrance to the whole spectacle. Others hurl themselves upon the mystery with all

their spirit, beat wildly against the impenetrable gates, and are vanquished in the end. For Toscanini the doors stand wide and he enters. His temperament guides him and his will wins him every struggle. Indeed, it is the human will, allied with sensitiveness, that always performs the miracle.

The problem of auditory musical perception, although physiologically grounded, remains chiefly psychological. When the expressive content of æsthetic pleasure takes on the attributes of representation—or, better, when the physiological factor mingles with the psychological one—the hearer moves from the auditory to the “spiritual,” or mental-emotional, world. He now sees and hears what the music has expressed to him through a combination of notes. Mendelssohn tells how he once played a Bach concerto to Goethe; and when it was finished, the gentle poet of *Marguerite* and *Mignon* said to him: “While you played, I seemed to see a procession of noble persons in gorgeous costumes, slowly descending a great marble staircase.” “Music reaches where words cannot,” wrote Victor Hugo. “There are times when the meaning of words wants to be expanded; when

this is so, we sing naturally and effortlessly. We take recourse to music, which is the true intermediary for every spiritual exaltation."

It follows from the nature of the conceptless terminology used by music that it can have no exact representative powers—in other words, it can express no clearly defined ideas. Hence the great difficulty of exact musical interpretation. Music is a language without words, without distinctions of mood, tense, and, above all, person. We no longer know who is speaking, who explaining himself—whether the author or his interpreter. Here the subjective quality of music—that is to say, the predominating subjectivity of the impression made on the listener—becomes easily apparent. Toscanini in conducting must transmit his mood to every musician in his orchestra, and every musician in the orchestra must drop his private mood and make himself absolutely receptive to the leader's.

But what is behind this word "mood"? A particular condition induced by sense stimuli which the mind cannot escape. What happens is that the mind receives a variety of impressions referable, all or in part, to these stimuli. In other words, music, travel-

ling by way of the physical senses, reaches the moral senses, sharpens the emotions, and favours that particular state of imperfect self-consciousness which constitutes the "state of mind" or *mood*.

Toscanini has to identify himself, spiritually, with the composer. A great plasticity of temperament is required for this, since, at large removes of space and time, he must be receptive to suggestion from the composer. It is indisputable, however, that he infuses *some* of himself into the music he interprets; and the amount is greater according as his reading diverges from the usual readings. Does the composer ever indicate in his printed score all the dynamics of a perfect performance? I think not. It is in supplying these omissions that Toscanini may be said to *complete* the music he conducts.

Each in its own medium, poetry, painting, sculpture, and architecture have the power to express clearly defined ideas and feelings. Music, on the other hand, in spite of any appearance of complete objectivity, is principally a subjective affair. The content of any snatch of orchestral music varies from person to person, depending on a number of different

circumstances, among which the chief are particular conditions of intellectual and social life. The ability (pre-eminently Toscanini's) to transmit a composer's mood through his own undoubtedly requires both plasticity and suggestibility developed to a notably high degree. The conductor must, in other words, be able somewhat to resemble the composer he interprets.

It may be added that mental images have the faculty of separating themselves from the undifferentiated material of their background and escaping, so to speak, into the surrounding atmosphere. I have called them moods, but they might better be described as mindless states of mind in search of the first mind that will harbour them.

A prolonged intimacy with people such as Brahms or Beethoven is undoubtedly capable of sharpening the musical intellect and rousing the analytic faculties. It is for just this reason that Toscanini, when he has a composer to interpret, will neither hear, nor study, nor speak of anything that does not directly concern that composer. He must know all

the vicissitudes of his life, his ideas, his joys and misfortunes, and, above all, the mood in which he wrote such-and-such a composition. Possibly this is responsible in part for that mysterious sense of respect he inspires during the gestation period of a new interpretation.

In spite of the fact that certain great composers have been made public heroes and surrounded with a loud noise of admiration, no one who cannot study them on their own level is really equipped to admire or discuss them. Toscanini has this merit: he can gauge and reach a composer's level more nearly than anyone else; yet at the same time he preserves a true idea of the distance separating them. And this humbleness is an avenue to his greatness as an interpreter.

Some years ago he had to direct a performance of *Norma*, at the Scala. After the general rehearsal, when he had seen that the perfection he wanted was entirely lacking, he refused to give the performance. For him Bellini's opera was one of the brightest gems in operatic literature and he would not see it imperfectly handled. "A work of such sublime beauty and

purity," he said, "couched in the simplest and most stirring language of the Italian genius, had to have a performance to match. I had done all I could, but the whole thing was unsatisfactory. And so I blamed everyone—beginning with myself."

CHAPTER THREE

The Memory Phenomenon

IN 1924 UMBERTO GIORDANO'S *MADAME SANS-GÊNE* was revived at the Scala. During a rehearsal for the performance, one afternoon, Toscanini stopped the violas in the middle of a passage, saying that they had ignored a certain stress sign. "But there's no such thing in the score," one of them protested, and, picking out the page in question, he brought it forward for Toscanini to see. There was certainly no indication of a stress at the point in question, and Tos-

canini, though not a bit convinced he had been mistaken, was forced to accept the note minus the accent. When he came to the theatre next day, he had an old score under his arm, and an expression of exquisite assurance in his eye. He opened the book and set it before his musicians; the stress was in its place. *His* score had been made from the first edition of *Madame Sans-Gêne*. The musicians were using a later arrangement, containing the trifling changes made by the author in the second edition. As for Toscanini, he had never noticed this; he had been conducting the opera from memory since first playing it—a few years earlier at the Metropolitan in New York.

Nothing ever escapes his sharp perception; and, once noted, no person, no object, no act, is ever lost. As everyone knows, Toscanini always conducts from memory. At the Augusteo in Rome we have watched him time after time, conducting his rehearsals—just as he would his public performances—without a note of music on his desk. His programs run all the way from Bach to Strauss, taking in by the way Mozart, Cherubini, Haydn, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schu-

mann, Berlioz, Brahms, Rimsky-Korsakov, and others. No matter what the composition, there is never a score on the leader's desk. During the Beethoven centenary he conducted the nine symphonies, one after the other, and directed *Fidelio* at the Scala—but with never a score. At the Scala more recently his audiences have watched him conduct the premières of Boito's *Nerone*, Pizzetti's *Debora e Jaele*, Puccini's *Turandot*, and Giordano's *La Cena delle Beffe*—but still no score.

In 1892 Franchetti's *Cristoforo Colombo* was given its première at Genoa, with Kaschmann singing the principal role. This commemoration of the immortal Genoese during the fourth centenary of his discovery of America provided one of the most impressive evenings in the history of the Carlo Felice Opera-house. The opera, which, according to plan, was to have been composed by Verdi, had at Verdi's own request been handed over to Alberto Franchetti. Circumstances had combined to arouse great expectations on the part of the public, and everyone looked forward eagerly to the première. Members of the royal family were to attend the performance;

and a box was reserved for the revered Verdi himself.

But the day before the performance Luigi Mancinelli, who was to have directed, fell ill. The impresario had a black moment. What was he to do with a brand-new opera? No other conductor knew the score. There was only one way out: he telegraphed to Toscanini, in Milan, inviting him to conduct the *Cristoforo Colombo*. For Toscanini it meant a perilous comparison—with the greatest Italian conductor of the period. Luigi Mancinelli had outstripped his only rival, Franco Faccio, and as yet had no competitor. Toscanini asked for one day in which to decide, hurried to the publisher's to get a score, and studied it that night. The next morning he sent a telegram of acceptance to Genoa and left immediately, to conduct the opera on the evening of the same day.

This story about a man who can jump out of a train, grab up his baton, and conduct a new opera sounds a little prodigious until one begins to be acquainted with Toscanini's stupendous energy. During the season of Boito's *Nerone* at the Scala, the Turin public wanted Toscanini at their Regio Opera-

house. And so, for some time, the conductor catapulted back and forth between Milan and Turin, directing Boito's opera at the Regio one night and at the Scala the next.

Often he would get to the Scala at about ten in the morning, take charge of the vocal auditions or do any one of a dozen other related tasks, lunch in his opera-house studio, rehearse again afterwards, conduct the performance itself, and finally leave the Scala for the night—not before one o'clock. Frequently he would go on working all night at home, an impassioned student, and conscientious beyond belief. He would analyse a thousand details in a score, dissecting it like a sorcerer-surgeon whose bistoury is the sharp ray of his own analytic powers. He would mark an accent in the margin of a page, indicate some new feature of expression, an emphasis, a note, a comment of his own on the music. A treatise on æsthetics and musical interpretation could be made of his marginal notes. Nor could any document more eloquently attest his genius than do these.

But to return to his memory.—Someone has

suggested that Toscanini conducts from memory because his extreme near-sightedness makes it impossible for him to do otherwise. This I doubt. Too much has been reported of his phenomenal memory as a young boy for it to be quite plausible. While still at the conservatory, he was famous for being the one boy who could repeat a 'cello lesson by heart after playing it twice over. He had only to hear a motif to be able to write it down, with all its minutest shadings; and he would remember not only whole passages, but the numbers of the pages on which they appeared and their positions on those pages. When his teacher Giusto Dacci heard the current rumours about his pupil's memory, he was frankly skeptical and asked Toscanini whether the report was true. In reply Toscanini at once sat down and wrote out the entire overture to the first act of *Lohengrin*! It is perfectly true that he is near-sighted and that to save his life he could not read a score half a yard away; but it is equally true that he has always been gifted with a miraculous memory and would certainly make use of it in the same way, now, even if

his vision were normal. He is, after all, not the only leader ever to have done it.

Following a concert at the Augusteo, in Rome, one day, a group of the musicians in his orchestra told me that they had never on any other occasion played with so much *assurance*. The choice of noun was their own. I should attribute that assurance in part to the fact that Toscanini directed from memory. He himself says of his scoreless conducting: "This makes it possible for me to have the whole orchestra in my hands from the beginning to the end of a performance."

It is told of the nineteen-year-old Gounod that one day, after having attended rehearsals of *Romeo et Juliette* while it was still in manuscript and being directed by Berlioz himself, he went to Berlioz's house, seated himself at the piano, and played the whole finale from memory. Berlioz stared at him aghast with fright and amazement. Was it some diabolic coincidence? Had someone else written music identical with his own and was it already abroad? "Where the devil did you get that music?" he cried.

“At your rehearsal yesterday, sir,” answered Gounod.

And Mozart was another prodigy in the same field: he, for one thing, memorized Gregorio Allegri's *Miserere* on hearing it for the first time, and immediately went home and wrote the whole thing out without a break.

Toscanini's astonishing memory is the product of a fusion of highly developed auditory and visual sensibilities, abetted by the intense concentration he puts upon a score when he studies it. What he hears is instantly translated into symbols in his mind, his power of auditory analysis being such that he can *write the music out*, mentally. Ugo Tansini tells how once (in 1898 probably), at the house of the Count of Savigliano, Toscanini became acquainted with the distinguished violinists Romanini and Enrico Polo and with Bolzoni, the famous composer and violinist. These three and Toscanini informally organized a quartet, with Toscanini playing the 'cello. To mark this meeting and to pay a graceful tribute to the Count, Bolzoni composed an *Adagio*, and the group performed it. A year after this the two violinists and

Toscanini met again in the Count's home, but Bolzoni was absent. "What a pity that Bolzoni has the score!" exclaimed the Count. "If he had left us a copy, we might have had that quartet we enjoyed so much over again." Toscanini took the other two aside. "Shall we surprise the Count?" he asked. "Give me a pencil—here's a piece of paper." And he proceeded to rewrite the *Adagio* from memory. It has not been recorded whether the Count's delight matched his surprise when he heard the first notes of his quartet come back to life.

The power of visualizing instantly what has been heard is closely connected with that instinct whereby some persons can perceive instantly the relation obtaining between a heard note and a musical notation. Saint-Saëns could do it at the age of three. But, on the other hand, there are certain mental defectives who have the same power to a high degree. We are forced to the conclusion, therefore, that one can have a good ear without being a musician—just as a great pianist can easily have a less accurate ear than some mediocre colleague.

The types of musical pleasure may be classified

according to the functions from which they spring: hearing, intelligence (running the gamut from sensation to emotion), memory, and, finally, imagination. Of these no single one is sufficient ground for a claim to musicianship. We have seen how little a good ear alone may count for. A good memory would be even less effective. Nor is any combination of the others valid without the presence of the second item—that of feeling. All four are highly developed in Toscanini; his musicianship, from whatever point of view approached, is complete.

H. Frédéric Amiel's designation of a landscape as a "state of mind" would be most applicable to a work of music. A mood can be called up in memory long after its occurrence and perhaps for this very reason more intensely renewed. This is especially true of the feelings connected with love. It would not be strange at all if the remembered feeling proved in some ways stronger than its original. In recalling a mood we try to recapture the circumstances in which it first came to birth—and the phenomenon of analysis is embodied in this process of search. Recreation of the circumstances is the last factor in

recollection. Even the re-evocation of a vision or a thrill inevitably implies recollection of the surrounding circumstances.

It may be that Toscanini's memory is stimulated by the performance itself. But the continuity of recollection is broken at once when an error strikes his ear. It is as though a cross-current broke in upon the sea of his memory. I remember how he once stopped his orchestra midway in a rehearsal—stemmed the wild storm-tide of sound that was pouring in on him—to shout: "You, there—why aren't you playing this note sharp?" And he pointed out one of the musicians with his baton and made him play the part alone to convince him that he really had been at fault. On another occasion a second violin chanced to graze the string next to the one he intended playing. The accident was trivial and the sound almost inaudible. Few people would have noticed it at all, but Toscanini stopped the whole orchestra, selected the culprit without a moment's hesitation, and said to him sharply: "One string will be quite enough, if you please!"

CHAPTER FOUR

The Dionysiac

MUSIC IS CHIEFLY A HUMAN BOND. IN SO FAR AS ITS function is to transmit from man to man the purest emotions of which the human soul is capable, it might be called a universal language. Popular belief to the contrary, musical ability is not a special faculty possessed exclusively by the elect. Every human being is necessarily and naturally an artist, although, of course, not all to the same degree. And in everyone, humblest labourer to fullest-fledged artist and rarest

virtuoso, the artistic faculty, although unequal, is similarly active. The artist works at the command of an instinctive and fatal impulse. Like the flower- and fruit-giving plant, he creates because of an instinctive need to do so. He is not even aware by virtue of what power he creates, nor why he uses one medium rather than another. Although reason may sometimes give him the clue, his real driving force and the source of his best inspirations are instinct; without it he is powerless to use the special faculties which qualify him as an artist. In a word, art is a natural faculty—or, even better, a natural activity—and where vital energy is lacking, there can be no true art. Inevitably, as fast as a race travels in social, moral, and physical decadence, its art shrinks and drops into imitation or falsification. As for music, it is an increment of life on life.

According to Tolstoy, a great work of art must inevitably make a deep impression on its beholder without any effort whatsoever on that beholder's part. He says: "The nature of this impression is such that the on-looker confuses himself, so to speak, with the creator; and it seems to him that his feelings, rather

than being suggested to him by another person, are drawn from within himself, and that the artist has expressed only what he himself has long dreamed of expressing."

In this spiritual brotherhood, in this fusion of audience and artist, lies one of the principal virtues of art. But does this fusion take place effortlessly, as Tolstoy would have it? Not at all. Clearly there must be an avenue of contact between the work of art in music and the public—a "medium" (if I may be permitted the expression), which, in virtue of a power possessed by neither of the other factors, presents the composition to the listener in the most favourable manner, shedding light on all its values and meanings. The composer, on the other hand, has concentrated all his faculties on the act of creation and is apt to believe that the values of his work are evident enough to need no further elucidation. From this, one might suppose that no one but the composer could give his work a really flawless performance. The contrary, however, proves often to be true; that is to say, the conductor, limited as he is to reproducing the work, discovers and brings out details and fea-

tures which in the hands of the composer might well have been lost. Puccini got no further than his first attempt to direct one of his own operas; and Verdi as conductor was only second-class. But there is a special set of persons to whom the written notes appear as symbols, holding a rich and extractable content of colour and movement. And Arturo Toscanini is one of these.

In *The World as Will and Idea* Schopenhauer says that nature's essence is to be sought in the artist—that in grafting himself upon her the artist completes nature; that he understands her through and through. He expresses clearly what she can only stammer; he cries to her: “Behold, *this* is what you meant!”

Putting concrete humanity in place of an abstract conception of nature, we have the following ratio: the composer is to nature as the conductor is to the composer. Let the hero of this story address his composers in the words of the Frankfurt philosopher to nature. It is through his intervention that we can say: “This is what we felt without being clearly aware of it; you reveal what before we perceived dimly.

You show us in the mirror of your spirit what before we saw indistinctly. You make clear to us the meaning of our own thoughts and emotions."

The student of Toscanini must look for more than the facile picture of a slender, erect, dark figure outlined against the diffused light of the music lamps, visibly shaken by the great tide of music charmed from a symphony by his own sorcery. It is not enough to have caught the gleam in his small, penetrating eyes fixed on the expectant orchestra—the orchestra waiting to make a temporary substitution of his personality for its own, following with the confident obedience and eagerness of a pupil towards his teacher. What the student must learn is how this unique conductor binds his musicians; how he subjugates them rather than commands. His very pulse becomes theirs—theirs his. The miracle he works is precisely this: he makes us feel his substantial oneness with the work of art; he reveals to us without our being aware of it the oneness of all being, the integrity of the vital substance—in the sense that he reconciles us with it through emotion. In our normal daily lives we are shut off from this unity by the very fact of individual-

ity and by the complete separateness of the physical "self" from the material "self" of music. But in this concert hall we are freed from the jail of the "I" and set at liberty in the unbounded heavens of universal feeling. And inasmuch as music accomplishes this, it rises to the level of religion, however different their methods and their aims. Ascetic meditation ends by submerging the individual ego in the ecstasy of divine revelation; and æsthetic pleasure behaves in the same way.

We find the same tendency in life's essential manifestation: love. Lovers dream of an absolute possession, a mingling of one in the other until no distinction remains. Our feeling during one of Toscanini's almost religiously impressive performances is analogous to an attainment of this dream. Is it not the annihilation, the abandonment, of personality on our part, and the absolute surrendering of spirit to the work of art on his, that makes this ecstasy possible for us—lets us live for an hour in a rare atmosphere, making it seem temporarily that all bonds between us and reality are broken?

Watching Toscanini at a rehearsal, we begin to

understand the musician. For here, in a room free of worldly pressures, he can at last fully express his thoughts. The treasure is yielded ingenuously and without ostentation. When he stands there thus, alone before his orchestra, there is pure contact of spirit between them. And we seem suddenly to catch a glimpse of that great soul, responsive as the Æolian harp, but subtler, shaken by mighty chords.

I have often thought that there could be no better schooling for a young musician than frequent attendance at Toscanini's rehearsals, for in preparing a number he instructs the performers elaborately in all those subtleties of musical interpretation that distinguish his intelligent and sensitive musical readings. For the most part there is an insufficient number of symbols in musical orthography to make possible a clear and precise indication by the author of the subtle gradations in time, colour, and rhythm that must make up the life of any composition. It is the interpreter who must counterbalance the lack, every time, and solve all ambiguities. For example, *rallentando* and *ritardando* are similar terms and very generally confused. But Toscanini finds a shade of dif-

441796

ference between them and conducts accordingly. For the former he directs a slackening of pace—the rhythms must be slowed, but not broken. In *ritardando*, on the other hand, they must be both slowed and broken—the original rhythm is, in short, altered by the command. “It has a different accent from the other!” says Toscanini.

The example is perhaps misleadingly slight. Toscanini analyses each composition with such attention and penetrative understanding that the composer himself rarely has anything to add or suggest. During a rehearsal of *Madame Sans-Gêne* Giordano, enraptured with the insight of Toscanini’s conducting, came out front to see him, exclaiming: “Believe me, Arturo, you may have all the other pleasures in the world, but one of the greatest is absolutely lost to you: hearing yourself interpreted by—Toscanini!”

The Greeks distinguished two phases in æsthetic experience: the Apollonian and the Dionysiac—the state of dream and the state of intoxication. These were the two creative impulses behind art. In the dream state the artist was said to have beheld the

noble shapes of the gods (the elements of art) rising before him, clearly revealed. But the division between him and the gods was obliterated when a deep emotion sufficiently aroused him; then Nature gloried in the reconciliation with her prodigal son and he, in the delirium of spiritual intoxication, became one with Dionysus. Now he began to identify himself with those proud and beautiful gods visioned in the Apollonian state. No longer the artist, he now became the work of art itself.

Toscanini's genius is the product of exactly such a double response to the elements of art: the phase of self-obliteration and identification with music following upon the phase of meditation—the exaltation being so violent that at times it proves perilous. During a rehearsal of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony at Turin, some time ago, Toscanini suddenly perceived that some of his musicians were making no more than a half-hearted response to his very lively demands. "I cannot possibly tolerate indifference in musicians," he exclaimed angrily. "It is your duty, at least, to second *my* interest!" But the negligence continued. One man in particular was inexcusably listless. "I

would kill a man for behaving like this!" cried Toscanini, and, leaping down from the rostrum, he flew at the impassive violinist with such impetuosity that his bow snapped and a splinter of wood scraped his forehead. An ugly scene followed, and the next day Toscanini was summoned before the authorities. In the trial that followed (and ended almost immediately in an honourable acquittal for the conductor), the celebrated psychologist Annibale Pastore, who had witnessed the whole episode, testified in Toscanini's behalf, giving a most interesting account and defence of the mental state that prompted the unfortunate act.

"The musical '*sacro furore*,'" he said, "is frequently capable of causing such intense excitation as fully to eliminate the normal personality. In this case it would be a grave mistake to call the normal Toscanini to account for what happened. Everyone, psychologist or not, can see what exaggerated proportions the musical *pathos* takes in him. One needs only to watch him at a rehearsal to understand that when he conducts, he is, so to speak, beside himself. The Dionysiac mood—essential to musical life—might

be described as orgiastic transfiguration, during which every inhibitive force is suppressed and the impulsive power exaggerated to the point of paroxysm. There is an irresistible automatism working within a clear dynamic pattern. In Toscanini's case this is illustrated by the involuntary bodily continuation of the musical rhythms: the painful stiffening of arm and leg muscles.

“Normal persons find it hard to understand the involuntary praxis of the artist, who moves in the grip of non-individual will and is compelled to destroy every obstacle in his way and even, like Dionysus, to destroy himself. The faculty of distinguishing good and bad and acting in accordance with the distinction is replaced by the faculty (acting and reacting with extreme violence) of response to beauty and ugliness. Behaviour no longer follows any deliberate plan; the involuntary quality of the gesture is obvious. The æsthetic single-trackedness attains such violence in Toscanini that anyone judging acts committed by him during the æsthetic excitation ought automatically to rule out any idea of responsibility—that is to say, all except the artistic responsibility

itself. Toscanini in this instance is absolutely guiltless. His unlawful act was not immoral and intentional; it was purely involuntary and unmoral. From a practical point of view, the blow of the baton was aimed, not at the man, but at his bow, and it was the wholly unforeseeable rebound of the blow that struck the violinist's face. It is simply a departure from the truth to say that Toscanini deliberately intended to injure the musician. To demand that an artist maintain an unbroken calm and poise when it is clear that he must rise to a pitch of high exaltation in order to do the very work asked of him is ridiculous. It is easy enough to *say* that he must be able to regain his balance immediately, but in practice the thing is impossible. Toscanini's state of excitation lasts over a long period; all night long after a concert his body remains tense and nervously charged. In his almost indescribable emotional state at that rehearsal Toscanini's act was typical of the unconsciousness of genius, breaking with all the surface conventions of normal life. To condemn him for it would be as bad as condemnation of musical genius."

Observe Toscanini from a close vantage-point

while he conducts: his almost triangular face grows rigid in the hard grip of muscles, under the pressure of his powerful jaws, with their expression of unshakable will. His distended forehead is moist with sweat, his chest swells, and he pants slightly. The two spread wings of his grey hair lie brushed smoothly back until the sudden nervous gesture of his hand over his head rumples them. Now a wave of tenderness sweeps up from the orchestra, moving from instrument to instrument with indefinable beat. His cheeks redden with excitement, his glance becomes brilliant and glowing, his forehead clears again, and an inexpressible agitation stirs him, arouses him, alters his whole look. His mouth is never compressed; one almost expects a song or a cry of grief to escape from his half-opened lips. In all this he feels the supreme ecstasy of a flawless and absolute contact with the composer; the satisfying consciousness of expressing himself through others almost as though he would stamp his image in their minds. His hands seem to speak, especially the rarely eloquent left hand, unimpeded by the baton. This is the hand that seems to house

his whole tactile sense; it stops or turns away the sonorous tide, wakens it, calls it out, and seems almost to sculpture the complex and plastic stuff of music. And an almost hypnotic force springs from these gestures. Now the movement is broad, describing a benison; now it narrows, as though suddenly hurt; the arm rises and descends or addresses itself to a single group of instruments in a brief, commanding gesture, always instantly obeyed.

At one moment he implores; at another he starts nervously as though to save himself from a threatening flame. Armies of notes pass beneath his fingers as at his signal the long procession of images pours from the music. Volition apart, the music arouses its echo in his imagination and he lives the composition he interprets. Like Paul Bourget's famous hero, he might say: "*Cet air-là, je l'ai compris parce que je l'ai vécu.*"

Two things are particularly pleasing: one, a characteristic tender gesture of his, like a caress bestowed on some invisible face; and the other, his expression when, with features suddenly grown rigid

as though in a mask of metal, the extraordinary arch of his brows widens above his eyes. This might be the face of a sorcerer imprisoning the phantoms he has been conjuring.

The right hand is less active than the left, but under its guidance it seems almost as though invisible electric wires issued from his baton and sent their current into the orchestra. He is the stupendous Prometheus who steals, not one, but a thousand sparks from Jove's chariot.

When Toscanini steps into the fire of the performance, he cannot keep from singing the main themes of whatever work is being played, and since he must not at any cost be audible, he makes a superhuman effort to sing only inwardly. His singing, then, is pent up within him—and this is why he is so often haunted, long after a concert or an opera, by the melody, with its tones now grown harsh, unmusical, and grating. But his feeling for song is one of the secrets of his thorough musicianship, and the ability to follow a melodic line with exquisite precision is the key to some of his most effective and intelligent performances. It has frequently been explained that

if a composition is to be "sung" properly, the correct movement must be found; on the other hand, it has been said (as, for example, by Wagner) that the correct movement is found when one comprehends the *melos*. As a matter of fact, the two are inseparables and each conditions the other. It is hard to put the nature of melody into logical terms—it is itself language of an elusive, inarticulate kind, possessing infinite suggestive power.

Toscanini's musical comprehension embraces—more important than melody—a thorough grasp of rhythm. In his hands the changeless physiognomy of the music is imprinted on its performance. Rhythm is the *raison d'être*, the universal essence, of music; and as the melodic element might be compared to the flesh and blood, rhythm is the bony structure of music. A sequence of tones in which no rhythmic pattern is present has not reached the stage of melody. Furthermore, while melody may have diverse effects upon peoples separated widely in culture and time, the same cannot be said of rhythm. The latter is the absolute, the mathematical, law of music. And a perfect grasp of it, together with the ability to read melody in-

telligently, is a requisite gift of the truly great orchestra-leader.

"We must have a single attack of all the violins!" says Toscanini, and sixty bows move as though they were one. The contact between him and his musicians seems regulated by a powerful sort of magnetism; but although he has an extraordinary influence over them, he does not belong to that school of conductors whose object is to destroy all spontaneity in the performers, and whose result is inevitably monotonous and mechanical execution. On the contrary, he prefers to have his musicians follow their own feelings, giving all that they have within them, but always obedient to his directing. He is the master of this court, but no tyrant, and he takes it for granted that his followers will understand what he points out and that their emotions will parallel his. One evening when the performers were particularly listless over the rehearsal of a new composition of which Toscanini was very fond, he flew at them despairingly: "You play everything as it is written. Certainly. You played every note. But these are not only notes: they

are notes written with blood, notes written with feeling. All this I don't get; and music is noise when it is played without feeling."

His attitude to these musicians is a fatherly one, however severe he may prove on occasion. Their deference to him in turn is founded on understanding and devotion, not on awe of superior power. Toscanini cannot understand how any musician can ever make a mistake. His own sensitive ear can distinguish through the combined voices of the entire orchestra that one string of the thirty-two violins is slack, and, pointing his infallible baton, he will say: "Wait a minute, your E string is slack." But if the error is one of reading, the comment becomes more scathing, punctuated by baton-taps on the reading-desk, and usually ends in a fatherly: "Shame, shame!"

Once, says G. Mario Ciampelli, he stopped the orchestra to turn on one of the musicians. "What do you think you're doing? Can't you read? Aren't you ashamed? Just look at the fourth note after number fifty-two. Those are triplets, aren't they? Then what the devil are you doing? And you belong to the Scala

orchestra! *Lei*¹ *e un asino!* You're an ass! Shame, shame, shame! You're an ass!"

The poor musician leaped to his feet, ghostly pale. He held out his arms towards the conductor. One less well acquainted with Toscanini might have protested against such insults, but this man cried out sorrowfully: "*Maestro, maestro*, for the love of Heaven, don't call me *Lei!*"

The *maestro* smiled; he could not speak for a moment. Then in a changed voice he said: "Come, boys. Attention. From number fifty-two." And the rehearsal went on.

Superficially the Toscanini rehearsal is at least a dramatic event. Look in at a rehearsal of *Madame Sans-Gêne* at the Scala:

It is half past twelve, midday. The body of the theatre is plunged in shadow in spite of three golden pricks of light from a chandelier. The foot-lights glow on a yellow room, crimson couches, a crimson arm-chair—the setting for Act Two, scene one. The rehearsal was set for half past twelve, yet

¹ "*Lei*" is the third person singular of the personal pronoun, used in the polite form of address. It is the Italian of the German "*Sie*." Ordinarily Toscanini would have used the intimate form in speaking to his musicians.

there is no one on the stage. The first to appear is the property-man; then Borzano, the Scala's stage-manager, comes in to look about. Between puffs of smoke he throws out orders to move one property or another. Then Votto shows up and sits down at the piano. Over the top of one of the front rows can be seen Umberto Giordano's broad, jovial face, with its heavy black brows, its grizzled hair. Suddenly a dim figure makes its entrance on the stage: Toscanini. The prompter disappears into his box. The rehearsal begins.

Forzano prescribes attitudes and gestures, he acts and recites, explains a phrase, the significance of a movement, the implication of an emotion. They rehearse, and rehearse again. Toscanini, his hands in his pockets, watches them, silent and inscrutable; he steps down into the auditorium to get the effect of a note, a detail of the staging. He offers an interpretation, or a suggestion—calm, patient, painstaking. "More contemptuous, these washerwomen!" "This crowd must be vehement." "When you sit down, better do it on the word '*conte*' instead of '*titoli*.' So." And he demonstrates.

Now Toscanini seems to be entirely absorbed in his newspaper, but as he reads, he continues to beat time with his head and his hands. Now he prowls about, one hand at his side, the other tugging nervously at his moustache.

The next day comes the rehearsal of the first act for singers and orchestra together. The theatre is darker than usual. Even the three bulbs are unlit and the curtains are drawn. But there is light, movement, rustling in the orchestra pit.

All sound stops when Toscanini appears before the curtain. He steps into the pit and mounts the rostrum. Holding the score in his hand, he scatters bits of advice to his musicians; then he closes the book, grasps his baton, and attacks the music.

The rehearsal seems to go well enough. Toscanini interrupts occasionally to warn one musician that he has skipped a note, another that the D ought to be played flat, a third that the F was written sharp, and a fourth that he should be ashamed to blunder so. But once the act is over, all the rage he has dammed up bursts. Sometimes it is the singers' fault; there has been too much conversation. And Toscanini

yells out his indignation at the top of his gruff voice in the picturesque phrases that are so typical of him. Not a sound, not a breath from the performers. They all know he is right and they understand that his upbraiding is not the upbraiding of blind rage.

Everybody works at the Scala, each for himself, but Toscanini for all. He attends the rehearsals of singers and chorus, the orchestra rehearsals, the rehearsals of singers and orchestra combined. His activity and single-mindedness set an example for all of them. Little by little the conception of the composer emerges from the chaos like a marble figure taking shape under the blows of the sculptor's chisel.

The principals, if they are at all intelligent, understand that in stripping their singing of all histrionism Toscanini prepares them for some claim to artistry. What they lose in petty vanity they gain in conscious artistry. Once in a while someone will be heard to say: "I have sung *Rigoletto*, *La Traviata*, *Mefistofele* so many times. And yet I never understood my part until he explained it to me today."

Now the stage is set for the last act of *Die Meistersinger*; on the left is the grand stand for Eva and

the master singers; in the back rises old Gothic Nuremberg; at the right a group of trumpeters wait for the conductor's signal. Toscanini strides rapidly about in the middle of the stage, casting quick nervous glances at the chorus, the principals, the dancers. There are a hundred and fifty of them, all waiting to begin. The conductor raises his hand, and the music surges up. The trumpets open the festival announcing the contest. Townspeople walk on in groups. Toscanini marks time for them with his nervous and eloquent hands, as he walks backwards before them, timing their steps with his own. The tailors' guild follows the cobblers' guild, and then come the bakers and apprentices. Toscanini rushes from one place to another, points out a gesture here, a movement there. He is a new Toscanini, flushed, excited. The stage is crowded, but his eye controls it all. The Nuremberg musicians arrive; Toscanini nods to them to look exultant, and he himself is exultant. During Sachs's song his face shows the emotion that ought to be visible on the faces of all the spectators; when Beckmesser makes a fool of himself, he cries sarcastically: "Mock him! Make fun of the poetaster." But when

THE DIONYSIAC

Walter sings the exquisite melody of the prize song, his face shines, he runs to the platform where Eva and the master singers stand, crying: "Don't you hear Walter's poem? Grow enchanted with it!"

He has a word for everyone, a suggestion to make, a direction to give, a posture to prescribe. And through it all, the rhythmic beating of his hands is not for a moment broken.

CHAPTER FIVE

Early Concerts and Opera

RETURNING TO ITALY AFTER THE ADVENTUROUS DAYS in Rio de Janeiro, Toscanini found himself a centre of interest and adulation on every hand. The events at Rio had succeeded in making his name prominent throughout the newspapers, and his fame now soared.

In 1884 he had been at Turin as 'cellist in the Parma orchestra. And in 1886, seven months before this repatriation, his name had appeared among the ranks of the strings on the programs of two popular

concerts given in an attempt to revive the old Pedrotti orchestra of the Regio Opera-house.¹ Now, six months later, when he was called again to Turin, it was to conduct Catalani's opera *Edmea*, at the Carignano Opera-house.²

Apropos of this, Depanis in his *Fifteen Years of Musical Life in Turin* tells that when the decision was made to stage *Edmea*, and a conductor had to be chosen, the publisher Lucca suggested: "There is a certain young fellow called Toscanini you would do well to get. One night at Rio de Janeiro, although he'd only been a 'cellist in the orchestra up to that time, he took up the baton in place of the company's two regular leaders (whom the audience had hissed off the stage) and conducted *Aida* from memory."

And so the novice leader was sent for and he accepted the commission with alacrity. The opera, which had been first presented on February 27 of the

¹ The orchestra of the Regio Opera-house, which, under the direction of Carlo Pedrotti, had played highly successful popular concerts in Turin for a period of ten years, beginning in March 1872. The first concert, given as a benefit performance for the workhouse, had been received with such unexpected enthusiasm that the organizer, accepting the tacit suggestion, had made the popular concerts an institution.

² The performance took place on November 4, 1886.

same year, under the direction of Franco Faccio, and had bitterly disappointed its composer by its poor reception, proved an instant triumph at Turin.³ There grew up between Catalani and Toscanini at the time a cordiality that soon gave place to the warmest friendship and remained a very strong and binding tie until the death of the unhappy composer.

The beardless youth did not, in spite of the prestige of his adventure in conducting, scorn resuming his 'cello. First, in 1886, he consented to leave the leader's rostrum to take his place in the orchestral ranks under the baton of Giovanni Bolzoni, in Turin. And in 1887, when *Otello* was to be given for the first time at the Scala, with Franco Faccio directing, he asked modestly to be allowed to play his 'cello in the pit once again. He very much coveted the privilege of taking an active part in this new creation of Verdi's, with Verdi himself presiding at the rehearsals. And whether or not he was a docile and submis-

³ The cast for the first performance included Mme Ferni Germano and Messrs. Sparapani and Fiñez. *Edmea* was presented a second time at Turin under Toscanini's direction, with Mme Bendazzi Garullo and Messrs. Emiliani and Sottolana in the cast. This was on May 4, 1889.

sive performer, one can be sure without question that he was capable.

In that 1886 season at the Carignano in Turin, Toscanini, whose extreme youth was no bar to force and ability, organized and established a full municipal orchestra. The presentations at the Regio Operahouse were based upon this orchestra of his, and it alone made possible the revival of the popular concerts instituted fourteen years earlier by Pedrotti.

From this time on, his swift and well-starred career mounted in a crescendo of successes, and the young conductor continued his ascent towards artistic perfection. Time after time he took upon himself, as he still does today, the exacting and hazardous task of introducing new works to the public, bringing their good points into the light and giving their ideas careful exposition. His interpretative and technical powers were always accompanied by a vigilant and penetrating critical faculty; the interpreter had always at his side a worker who tested the stuff of art and could be relied upon to reveal the essential pattern of the works with which he dealt. But if Tos-

canini was unhesitatingly contemptuous of what he thought bad music, he was always the personified good genius of what he recognized as real gift.

Ruggiero Leoncavallo had composed his opera *Pagliacci* in some small hope of emulating Mascagni, whose clamorous success with *Cavalleria Rusticana* had been the most stimulating sort of incentive. Once it was written, however, he had been unable to find a publisher who would have anything to do with the work and he was trying his best to scrape together a living in France when at last, through the intercession of the celebrated baritone Maurel, the Sonzogno house agreed to consider it. On the evening of May 17, 1892, at the Dal Verme Opera-house of Milan, and under Toscanini's direction, *Pagliacci* brought its composer such a storm of acclamation that he was instantly and immovably established as a figure in the operatic world. After that the comparisons between *Pagliacci* and *Cavalleria Rusticana* came thick and fast.

"It was a brilliant success," writes a critic of the period. "After the prologue the composer was called out three times, and during the performance

at least twenty. There were two encores:⁴ one of Nedda's aria and another of Harlequin's song. Leaving the theatre, we could still hear the applause for Leoncavallo's fourth or fifth proscenium call after the final curtain. The interpretations, both of the principals—Mme Sthele and Messrs. Maurel and Giraud—and of the chorus, were praiseworthy from every point of view. Toscanini, whose conducting had been superb, was also called before the curtain time after time by a spirited and enthusiastic audience, which had shown a disposition to be pleased from the very beginning."

After conducting *Cristoforo Colombo* (1892) in commemoration of the fourth centenary of the discovery of America, Toscanini accepted a long-time contract with the impresario of the Carlo Felice Opera-house, and took Franchetti's opera on a triumphal tour. He next stayed several years at the Regio in Turin, and there directed the première of Puccini's *Manon*, on February 1, 1893. During the same period he conducted orchestral concerts at the Teatro Regio, acquainting his audiences, among other

⁴ At that time Toscanini still allowed them.

things, with Tschaikowsky's Sixth Symphony. On the 22nd of December 1895 he directed (still at the Regio), the first Italian performance of Wagner's immortal *Götterdämmerung*.⁵ Puccini's *La Bohème* was heard on February 1, 1896. The operas were now alternated with symphony concerts, and another innovation was introduced: the Symphony in C major by Schubert.

At the end of his season with the Regio, in the same year, Toscanini left Turin and went to Milan to conduct at the Scala. There his personality began to take definite shape, and his true, mature artistic development might be said to have begun. He had not yet been appointed opera conductor, but directed all the Orchestrale's concerts. In this exceedingly responsible position he was successor to the celebrated Giuseppe Martucci, who had held the post uninterruptedly until 1893. This meant that Toscanini had to sustain comparison with a conductor whose supremacy in Italy was unquestioned and who was recognized everywhere as one of the foremost orchestra-leaders

⁵ With a cast including Mmes Ehrenstein, Cruz, Zampini, De Martini, and Decima, and Messrs. Grani, Wilmant, Mazzara, and Foglia.

of the period. It was in his position at the Scala that Toscanini, thus qualified, began to test his warlike temper, entering the field with some of the most formidable works of the period—new works, made formidable by their own intrinsic difficulties as well as by the not yet conquered hostility of a large part of the public. He extended the Wagnerian program as evolved by Martucci, and performed the entire prologue of *Götterdämmerung* with such effect that the opera was included in the plans for the following season at the Scala, under the direction of Vittorio Vanzo.

In attestation of the unique musical spirit and exceptional culture of this twenty-nine-year-old conductor, I transcribe below several programs from that period:

Scala Symphony Society

An orchestra of 120 musicians; conducted by
A. Toscanini

First Concert: April 26, 1896

1. Symphony in B major, no. 4 Haydn
2. Overture Miniature (*Casse-noisette Suite*)
..... Tschaikowsky
- Danse Arabe (*Casse-noisette Suite*) Tschaikowsky

ARTURO TOSCANINI

Marche Miniature (*Second Suite*) . Tschaikowsky
3. Prologue to *Götterdämmerung* Wagner
Assisting artists: Mmes Francescatti Pagani, Ceresoli, Mori; Mr. Giuseppe Borgatti
(This will be the first performance of all numbers.)

Second Concert: May 3, 1896

1. Symphony no. 1 Beethoven
 2. Holberg Suite Grieg
 3. Tragic Overture Brahms
 4. Prologue to *Götterdämmerung* Wagner
-

Third Concert: May 10, 1896

1. Symphony in C major Schubert
(First performance at the Scala)
 2. Andante Barcarola (for strings) Mancinelli
Sarabande (for strings) Giraud
 3. Danse Macabre Saint-Saëns
 4. Prologue to *Götterdämmerung* Wagner
-

On June 6, 1896 Toscanini directed Puccini's *La Bohème* at the Sociale Opera-house in Trent. Returning to the Regio in February 1899, he conducted the Turin première of *Tristan und Isolde*, which had had

its first Italian presentation at the Teatro Comunale of Bologna eleven years earlier under the baton of Giuseppe Martucci. One evening during the run at Turin Toscanini had the house lights darkened for the performance, intending in that way to keep the audience's attention more perfectly focused on the stage. The subscribers, when they found themselves buried in unasked-for darkness, lifted their voices and called loudly for light. Light was granted them, to be sure, but the performance suffered an interruption, and Toscanini's opinion remained unchanged. Unable to keep the rest of the house in darkness, he reached out and smashed the reading-light on the director's stand, and then, grabbing the ship's helm (it was still the first act), he turned on full speed ahead and steered it at a pace that would shame any modern transatlantic steamer, landing Isolde and Tristan in Cornwall in less than forty minutes. That the ship stayed above water and the singers and musicians kept their bearings, only the gods are to be thanked. In the outcome, the unbridled race succeeded in soothing both conductor and audience, and an honourable compromise was made between them: darkness, yes—but not

too much of it! And, peace restored, the second and third acts were gems of balanced execution.

Although Toscanini had not yet been able to enter the Scala as conductor for opera, his thirst for new and unhackneyed works in that field led him to offer a first performance of *Hänsel und Gretel* at the Manzoni Opera-house of Milan, in 1897—delighting the public with the now traditional child-adventures, set to music by Humperdinck. In the following year, while at the Scala Leandro Campanari was presenting a gala concert with the Italian orchestra for the concerts of the Imperial Institute of London, Toscanini was beginning his series of symphonic programs at the General Italian Exposition at Turin.

CHAPTER SIX

More Concerts and Talks on Music

WHEN HE CONDUCTED THAT FAMOUS SERIES OF CON-
certs in the Giuseppe Verdi Hall, during the General
Italian Exposition at Turin, Toscanini was scarcely
thirty-one years old. Before his graduation from the
conservatory, he had taken part (as 'cellist, not con-
ductor) in a series of thirty-four concerts by the
Parma orchestra in the rotunda of the current Turin
exposition. Orchestras from other cities—from Turin,
Naples, Milan, and Rome—had played there as well,

and the roll-call of conductors had included many illustrious names, including that of Franco Faccio. But this time the series belonged indisputably to Toscanini; from the 8th of May to the 14th of July 1898, and then, after a short respite, from the 28th of August to October 31, he directed forty-three concerts. Of these, one was for the benefit of the Night Shelter and Orphan Asylum of Milan; and another a rendition of the exposition's *Inaugural Cantata* (with words by E. A. Berta and music by Luigi Mancinelli). The orchestra also took part in a benefit concert at the Church of the Sacred Heart of Mary and lent its services in a gala performance of Bellini's *Norma* at the Regio Opera-house.

From an artistic point of view the most important event in the series was the first Italian performance of Verdi's three *Sacred Pieces*, with four leading voices, and a chorus of one hundred and eighty singers, including the Evangelical Choral Society, pupils of the Musical Lyceum, and the Regio Opera-house chorus. In the symphony concerts the orchestra was assisted by the violinists Enrico Polo and Teresina Tua, and the pianists Giuseppe Martucci and Giovanni

Sgambati, who gave the first Turin performance of their concerto for piano and orchestra.¹

Apropos of the high standard to which Toscanini has always engaged his name, in order to command the attention of bored, over-sophisticated, or indifferent audiences for compositions of real worth (either as yet unknown or too seldom heard), his campaign for Catalani is memorable. It has been almost a matter of honour with him to try to restore to prestige compositions that changing fashion has condemned to undeserved oblivion. But his attitude in championing such compositions, in spite of its occasional savour of combat, has always been absolutely unprejudiced and distinguished by its independence in relation to the diverse currents of criticism.

The fashion for realism, inaugurated by Mascagni with *Cavalleria Rusticana*, had very much darkened poor Alfredo Catalani's star. In vain had Maestro Mugnone, at the Costanza Opera-house in Rome, exerted every effort to revive the delicate musician's popularity. The "general public" likes powerful, if

¹ For a list of the works performed at the Turin Exposition, see Appendix A.

not always significant, sensations; and Catalani's music is based on profound mystic comments of non-obvious origin. Rather than blinding colours and full, midday vitality, he has the soft languor of the mild spring full moons. But it was in accordance with a preference for the former that his operas had been judged and the successes (even they seemed more often to be cold demonstrations of friendliness than outbursts of enthusiastic conviction) sifted from the failures. All his works had had fortunes of a fairly uniform grey tint, so that it would be difficult to name the greatest success among them—that is, with the exception of *Edmea*, which by far surpassed the rest in popularity.

La Wally, which appealed more than any of the others to a learned and intellectual public, was the last of Catalani's written operas. I say "written," because it is almost certain that he was planning another, which his untimely death prevented him from writing. This was to have been called *Nella Selva*²—an adaptation of one of Tolstoy's novels. A little before his death he spoke of it sorrowfully, saying:

² *In the Forest.*

"Farewell to my new opera! I have the whole thing in mind—but now I cannot finish it."

Toscanini was well aware that by their very nature Catalani's operas were not of a class that could hope to win the public on first hearing. But he was persuaded, on the other hand, that much poetry lay hidden in the unhappy composer's works, and he proposed to waken *Loreley* and *La Wally* from their overlong sleep and to avenge them before public and press.

La Wally had been performed for the first time at the Scala, on January 20, 1892, under the direction of Eduardo Mascheroni. Toscanini repeated it on February 17 of the same year at the Carlo Felice. It may be that he saw in Catalani the founder of a new school, to be referred to, perhaps, as the "Tuscan School"—with Catalani, Puccini, and Mascagni as its three closely related Tuscan members. For if, as the press of Hamburg observed, there are analogies between *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Puccini's *Villi*, the latter opera has just as much of a counterpart in Catalani's *Elda*; and in addition to musical analogies of a technical order, one can trace a number of like-

nesses in situation, plot, and colour. Certain episodes in *Manon Lescaut* are undoubted derivations from *La Wally*—for example, the lamp-lighter's excerpt in the one is blood-sister to the Bacchic song in the other. The last act of *Manon* and the fourth act of *La Wally* are strikingly similar; at certain points there is precisely the same flavour, and the manner of expressing pathos and emotion is almost identical in the two. I have been told that *La Wally*, arriving after *Manon*, was poorly received at the Reale Opera-house of Madrid, and severely criticized on the score of its strange resemblance to the second-named opera. It is regrettable that the Spanish press should not have known that Catalani was Puccini's predecessor!

The point of importance here is that, once he made up his mind to wage a war for Catalani's cause, Toscanini proceeded into the field and succeeded in triumphing over public and critical injustice and bringing the composer back into favour. Catalani's untimely and sorrowful death had been caused by tuberculosis. During the long illness that preceded it, Toscanini had remained with him constantly, a faithful and devoted nurse; and in those painful days

towards the end his letters to Alfredo Caselli were grief-stricken in their description of the slow and bitter decline of the composer who had been one of his dearest friends. Who can guess how many times, later, his own courage was renewed under siege by remembrance of the composer's words: "Even in writing a masterpiece you run the risk of never being listened to—or else heard and pitied."

The composer of *Loreley* and *La Wally* suffered unspeakably from the attitude adopted towards him by a part of the press and a group of his colleagues. With those who proposed to make him renounce his artistic convictions he grew infuriated. "After all," he said, "to have a style of one's own must count for something! It is about time, right now, that I had a whole stroke of good luck, instead of half a one—which is the best I've ever done so far."

On rare occasions he would burst out in a sally of wild rebellion, incongruous in the face of his normal mildness: "I live exactly like a patient snail, with his horns held in for the moment—but ready to make their appearance at the first real opportunity. All I

hope is that by the time they do show themselves, they will be long and sharp enough to run through at least a brace of critics." Then the easily understood desperate cry: "I am sick of this artistic life that gives me neither morally nor mentally what it should. But patience—!"

Although not a theatre could be found to open its doors to his *Loreley*, he felt no resentment at the heaping of honours upon Franchetti, Mascagni, Puccini, and Leoncavallo; and it was without rancour that he said: "They were able to do the trick; I never could." The words were pathetic, inoffensive; and they were the acknowledgment of a still sadder truth: the protest within resignation of a genius who recognized his own value, but found himself isolated and, worse still, opposed.

All this Toscanini had heard spoken by Catalani, and now it caused him deep bitterness that he had been unable to begin his campaign earlier, during the composer's lifetime. Above all, he was stirred by remembrance of the third act of *Loreley*—undoubtedly Catalani's best. Could its perfection have been approached by any of the young artists of the period?

The enchanting "Dance of the Undines," with its mysterious voices, voluptuous sighs, and sorrowful laments breaking from the orchestral embroidery, is pure sculpture in sound, and the dance-movement is like a tender, melancholy dream.

Struggling to reinstate him in the musical world, Toscanini never lost sight of the beloved image of a friend and artist whom he knew to have been cruelly undervalued. "I always think of him," he says; "the place he left will never be filled for me. He who never had any joy was so thirsty for it! He was as ingenuous and trusting as a child. 'Do you know, such-and-such an impresario wants to produce *Wally*,' he would say. And he needed faith and hope, for the performance would never come, and his suffering was so terrible! During the last days of his illness he said to me: 'Remember, Arturo, you must make that change we spoke of and correct the parts for the brasses—you know where—in *Loreley*.' He was afraid to hear the truth and he wanted to know it. He would say these things in order to tell from my answer whether or not there was any hope for him. And I would say: 'But, my dear friend, why should I make any changes?

You can do all that yourself, as soon as you're well.' His lonely, wasted face would clear for a moment; but I don't know whether he really believed me. And I did have to make those corrections myself, for Catalani died a few days later."

On those rare occasions when he does befriend words, Toscanini is an altogether persuasive and ingratiating speaker. His *Conversations (Talks on Music)* are full of absorbing data as well as illuminating side-lights on his own view-point. It becomes clearer than ever, reading them, that this man never forgets anything: dates, names, stories, as well as the literature of his special province, remain in his mind like some super-child's learning in an unerased copy-book. But we borrow from his talk, as follows:

"Only look at Beethoven's response to Goethe's famous antipathy for him! Writing to Bettina Brentano on February 10, 1811, he said: 'If you write to Goethe and happen to speak of me, pray make use of every phrase that might help to express my esteem and reverence for him. Such a poet as he cannot possibly be accorded too great recognition. Nor can a people have any stronger claim to honour than that he is one of them.' On the 12th of April in

the same year, Beethoven wrote to Goethe expressing a deep desire to make the poet's acquaintance, personally, so that he might present his 'respectful compliments,' and concluded his letter: 'A little before that, Breitkopf and Härtel will send you the music for *Egmont*—that noble *Egmont* which has stirred me so deeply and which I have re-created and re-felt with you, in setting it to music. I am anxious to know your opinion of what I have written and will find your censure as precious and acceptable as praise.' Goethe did not even bother to answer; for the poet hadn't the least liking for Beethoven; nor did he have the remotest idea that he was dealing with a genius easily of his own rank and probably superior."

Discussing Mozart's unhappiness:

"No one can help marvelling that a man who died at the age of thirty-five could have written such an enormous body of work—the catalogue of Breitkopf and Härtel's monumental edition lists eight hundred separate numbers! The *Requiem Mass* was his last and unfinished work and on it he was in process of building a half-historic, half-legendary romantic structure. But his greatness availed him nothing at the last ceremony; not one of the friends who came to his funeral was willing to brave the driving snow to accompany his body to the cemetery.

A few started, but none went the whole way; and so he was buried in the common graveyard, with the result that it has never been possible to trace his remains, nor even to determine just where the grave was dug."

"The original manuscript of Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony—which for its undeviatingly lofty nervous styles, for its poetry, for the nobility of the ideas and the beauty of their development, is worthy of its place among the sublimest creations—this symphony in which the giant of Bonn overstepped Haydn's and Mozart's closed circle of loveliness and entered the sphere of the sublime—was sold at public auction in the original manuscript and consigned to the composer Dessauer for three florins and ten kreutzer.³

"And apropos of my campaign against encores, the warning written in the first violins' score in the 1806 edition indicates exactly (as I have always insisted) how much it hurts and endangers the rest of a program to lengthen the agreed time for any one composition. Beethoven himself said: 'Since this symphony is unusually long, it should be performed at the beginning rather than at the end of a concert. If it is played later, the effect intended by the composer may be lost upon an audience whose attention has already been dulled by the preceding numbers.'"

³ Approximately a dollar and a half.

Still speaking of the *Eroica*, he repeats a favourite anecdote as told by Berlioz: "There was a celebrated curiosity in the first movement: a blare of horns that seemed to anticipate the entrance by four beats. This some editors had even taken the liberty of correcting, mistaking it for a stupid error on the copyist's part. But the composer was not of the same opinion. At a rehearsal of the symphony one day, the conductor, Ries (who was, incidentally, one of Beethoven's own pupils), supposing in his turn that the cornetist was responsible for the surprising notes, shouted at him angrily: 'For heaven's sake, can't you at least count the beats?' Beethoven, who was present, flew into a rage and could hardly be dissuaded from boxing Ries's ears."

And apropos of the artificiality of certain passages of descriptive music, Toscanini says: "I should not like to guarantee that Richard Wagner meant to read us a lesson right in the middle of the legend; it does seem to me, however, that a person who wanted to find symbolism in it at any cost could succeed without much trouble. Wagner could not have done better if it had been his intention to discourage those

who imagine that to compose music one need do no more than copy down the songs of the birds. Even were it admitted that man had invented music out of his desire to imitate—merely to translate into human music—the notes of the singing bird, in one case of one man at least we should have to acknowledge that the composer drew upon an unparalleled knowledge and technical ability. This man was Richard Wagner. The effort itself involved in the actual undertaking makes it absurd to look to the voices of the air for the origin of these melodies which the composer seems to have drawn from a hidden source in the depths of his heart.”

Commenting on *Die Meistersinger*, Toscanini says: “With this opera Wagner meant to wage a decisive war both for himself and for his art. Here Wagner is represented by Walter von Stolzing, Liszt by Hans Sachs (that genial mediator between the audacity of the new school and the wilful conservatism of the old), the critic and composer Hiller by the pedant Beckmesser. *Die Meistersinger* is a comic antithesis of *Tannhäuser*. Its intention is to bring into the æsthetic field the conflict that *Tannhäuser* puts in

the field of chivalry. Looking at it in this light, the character of Hans Sachs parallels that of Wolfram von Eschenbach. The overture to the piece is the Wagnerian polyphonic system in its highest expression. Here the principal themes of the opera follow one another, superimpose themselves one upon the other, and are mingled with an extraordinary exuberance of detail and originality of instrumental weavings. At the end there is a powerful synthesis of the three principal themes and a recurrence of the Meistersingers' theme, shorn at last of all austerity: a triumphal march of the new art, grafted upon the old."

Returning once more to the subject of Beethoven, Toscanini tells bitterly of the beloved great man's disappointment at the breaking of a particularly cherished contract with the Vienna Opera-house, according to which he had agreed to compose one serious and one comic opera each year for the trifling pay of 2400 florins.⁴ It was during the period of dejection and disillusionment following this event that he wrote the Fifth Symphony and the *Coriolanus* overture. "I have never succeeded in playing it as I feel it," says

⁴ Perhaps 960 dollars.

Toscanini of the latter. "It is as filled with sublime ideas and fresh expressions as a canto out of the *Divine Comedy*."

In contradistinction to Berlioz's unjust and paradoxical criticism of Beethoven's First Symphony, Toscanini observes that Beethoven in this work is like a crouching lion—his spring is perfectly implied. The melodic spontaneity of the music, its gracious form and smooth development, make it utterly captivating to the ear. The symphony throughout, but above all in the finale in *rondo* form, bears an imprint of ingenuous gaiety. The *andante*, alone, holds some suggestion of that melancholy which was to swell to tragic breadth in the succeeding symphonies.

Apropos of Beethoven's Ninth: "That symphony, which was for so many years neglected (recognized at last by Wagner, who conducted it at a Palm Sunday concert in Dresden in 1846), went unheard in Italy until April 18, 1878, when the Quartet Society of Milan performed it under the leadership of Franco Faccio." Toscanini has repeated the Ninth time after time, approaching it always with increased depth of feeling. He says that there are no words capable of

giving even an approximate idea of the beauty of the two melodic themes in its *adagio*, the incomparable grace of ornamentation, the melancholy tenderness, and the passionate grief. If words could express anything akin to them, music would have a rival such as the greatest poets have never been able to offer her. One must exclaim with Berlioz: "Hide your faces, O poor great poets; the tongue you speak is harmonious and pure, but you cannot vie with this art of notes. O revered and ancient mortals, you are conquered. *Illustrious, but vanquished.*"

Here is Toscanini's graceful description of Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz* (played on September 10, 1898, at Turin). The inspiration for this composition was not taken from Goethe's *Faust*, but from Nikolaus Lenau's poem, and more particularly from the "dance at the village tavern" episode. Mephistopheles and Faust come to the inn, where a wedding is being celebrated with music and dancing. A rose-cheeked, brilliant-eyed girl with lovely raven hair catches Faust's eye, and arouses a troubling passion in his breast. He is eager to clasp her in his arms, to rush headlong into the dance embracing her; but he does not dare.

“A curious race, indeed,” says Mephistopheles, “this brood of the first guilty two. It makes contracts with the Devil, and trembles before a wisp of a girl!”

“Your bows run too soft on the strings!” he shouts to the players. “Your waltz will do for the aged and the lame—never for a full-blooded and fiery youth! Give *me* the violin. You shall hear notes you have not yet heard and follow the tread of a different dancer on the tavern floor!”

Mephisto seizes the violin. Pulsing and languishing, his music is like a cry of passion; and it conjures a marvellous vision out of the sultry night. The notes mount and fall, and again well up: even so before their eyes covetous waves close in about a naked bather. With a cry a young boy rushes from the thicket of reeds out into the water to seize the bather, but she holds him away and strives against him. The sound of the music is bitter and wild at first, but little by little it softens. The bather takes pity upon her lover, and the struggle ends in a tender kiss.

Again the voice of the violin is lifted, fiery and irresistible, and in the tavern a circle of Bacchantes compels the watchers to follow. Faust and the dark

girl dance. He clasps her hand, whispers a pledge, and draws her away through the half-open door towards the forest. They fly now through fields and meadows entwined in each other's arms, their feet scarcely touching the ground. The voice of the violin is slowly lost in the distance, but the forest leaves repeat its melody like the echo in the mind of an amorous dream. The nightingale sings in the thicket, as though Mephisto had commanded; and the lovers yield at last before the sweeping tide of their desire.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Toscanini at the Scala

AFTER THE BREAK-UP OF THE ORCHESTRAL SOCIETY of Milan the Scala was closed for one year. At the end of that time, in order to keep the celebrated opera-house from being left in disuse, a group of generous-spirited persons took over its management for a three-year period—thereby earning the permanent gratitude of the Milanese public. The project was non-speculative, and its aims entirely artistic. The list of benefactors is as follows: Duke Guido Vis-

conti di Modrone (president), Cavaliere Giulio Gatti-Casazza (general manager), Cavaliere Enrico Bambergi, Commendatore Arrigo Boito, Cavaliere Erminio Bozzotti, Cavaliere Luigi Esengrini, and Cavaliere G. B. Vittadini.

It rested chiefly upon Toscanini to put into action the program for the revival of the Scala's waning fortunes at that decisive moment. His appointment meant that he was already recognized as one of the foremost of living conductors. Preceding him at the Scala, Franco Faccio (1872-88) had been succeeded by Leopoldo Mugnone (1891); Mugnone by Ed- uardo Mascheroni (1892); Mascheroni by Rodolfo Ferrari (1896); and Ferrari by Vittorio Vanzo (1897).

Under Toscanini there were three memorable seasons: 1899, 1900, and 1901, inaugurated respectively with *Die Meistersinger*, *Siegfried*, and *Tristan und Isolde*. Toscanini's renditions of *Siegfried* and *Tristan* (with Giuseppe Borgatti, superb in the two leading roles) were especially stirring in their interpretative vigour and warmth. And the emotion, at least, roused by that first vision of the great Wagne-

rian art, revealed through Toscanini's genius, has never yet been equalled in the Scala's history.

The programs he presented are eloquent of the taste and judgment of the then thirty-two-year-old conductor. They appear in outline below:

Carnival and Lent Season, 1899

Operas: Wagner's *Die Meistersinger*; Mascagni's *Iris*; Bellini's *Norma*; Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*; Verdi's *Falstaff*; Massenet's *Le Roi de Lahore*.

Sacred works: Verdi's *Stabat Mater*, *Laudi alla Vergine*, *Te Deum*; Perosi's oratorio *La Resurrezione di Lazzaro* (*The Resurrection of Lazarus*).

Ballets: Manzotti's *Rosa d'amore*; Massenet's *Le Carillon*.

Toscanini's insuperable energy made it possible for him to sustain alone the whole burden of this series of concerts, culminating in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel*. It was with the latter that he began his exposition of modernism in music.

TOSCANINI AT THE SCALA

Orchestral Society at the Scala, 1899

First Concert—April 27

1. Overture from the opera *Sargino* Paer
 2. Concerto in B flat minor (the author at the piano G. Martucci
 3. Scherzo from *Scene Veneziane* L. Mancinelli
 4. Serenata from D major Symphony .. G. Sgambati
 5. Scherzo from E flat Quartet Cherubini
 6. Andante Saturnale (*Incantesimo*) Celega
 7. Overture from *Francesca da Rimini* .. Morlacchi
-

Second Concert—May 6

1. Second Symphony Brahms
 2. March (from the *Fantastic Symphony*) .. Berlioz
 3. Scherzo (from *Romeo and Juliet*) Berlioz
 4. Overture from *Tannhäuser* Wagner
-

Third Concert—May 11

1. Second Symphony Brahms
2. Leonore Overture, no. 3 Beethoven
3. Love Scene from *Tristan und Isolde* Wagner

Sung by Teresa Arkel, Emma Trentini, and Raffaele Grani

ARTURO TOSCANINI

Carnival and Lent 1900

Operas: Wagner's *Siegfried*; Verdi's *Otello*; Puccini's *La Tosca*; Galeotti's *Anton*; Tschai-kowsky's *Eugen Onegin*; Wagner's *Lohengrin*.

Ballets: Marenco's *Sieba*; R. Mader's *Die Roten Schuhe* (*The Red Shoes*)

*First Grand Concert of the Orchestral Society
at the Scala*

April 22, 1900

Part One

1. Pastoral Symphony Beethoven
2. Overture from *The Bartered Bride* Smetana

Part Two

1. *Nella Foresta Nera* (*In the Black Forest*) Franchetti
2. Andante Cantabile (from String Quartet, opus 2) Tschaikowsky
3. Salterello (from String Quartet, opus 27) .. Grieg
4. (a) The Magic Garden of Klingsor (from *Parsifal*) Wagner
(b) Entrance of the Gods into Valhalla (from *Das Rheingold* Wagner

TOSCANINI AT THE SCALA

Second Grand Concert—April 27

Part One

1. Prelude from *Hänsel und Gretel* .. Humperdinck
2. New World Symphony Dvořák

Part Two

1. Queen Mab (Scherzo) Berlioz
2. (a) Dance of the Mermaids (from *Loreley*) ..
..... Catalani
(b) Flight of the Lovers (from *Scene Veneziane*)
..... Mancinelli
3. (a) Siegfried's Death and Funeral March (from
Götterdämmerung) Wagner
(b) Prelude to Act One of *Die Meistersinger* ..
..... Wagner

Third Grand Concert—May 12

Assisting Artists: Arrigo Serato; Signor Mapelli at
the piano

Part One

1. Overture to *Il Matrimonio Segreto* (*The Secret Marriage*) Cimarosa

ARTURO TOSCANINI

2. Concerto in D major, for violin and orchestra
..... Beethoven
3. Overture to *Othello* Dvořák

Part Two

1. Nocturne and Scherzo from *Midsummer Night's Dream* Mendelssohn
2. (a) Adagio ma non troppo (from Violin and Piano Concerto, opus 44) Bruch
(b) Zingaresca for violin and piano .. Sarasate
3. (a) Overture to *Faust* Wagner
(b) Ride of the Valkyries Wagner

Last Grand Concert—May 14

Part One

1. Overture to *The Magic Flute* Mozart
2. Pastoral Symphony Beethoven

Part Two

1. Prelude to Act Four of *La Wally* Catalani
2. Intermezzo from Act Four of *Marion Delorme*
..... Ponchielli
3. (a) Death and Funeral March from *Siegfried*
..... Wagner

TOSCANINI AT THE SCALA

(b) Entrance of the Gods into Valhalla (from
Götterdämmerung) Wagner

Carnival and Lent 1901

Operas: Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*; Boito's *Mefistofele*; Mascagni's *The Masks*; Goldmark's *The Queen of Sheba*; Puccini's *La Bohème*; De Lara's *Messalina*.

Ballets: G. Bayer's *Sun and Earth*; Delibes's *La Source*.

Assisting Artists: Mmes Caligaris-Marty, Emma Carrelli, Teresa Ferraris, and Messrs. Feodor Chaliapin, Enrico Caruso, Giuseppe Borgatti, Gaudio Mansueto, Francesco Tamagno.

The death of Giuseppe Verdi occurred on the 27th of January 1901. In his surpassing love for the illustrious composer Toscanini was eager to do something that would be both an unforgettable event and an act of reverence towards the memory of a great man. From the top of the Famedio Chapel at the Monumentale Cemetery he conducted the immortal Chorus from *Nabucco* (*Nebuchadnezzar*). Afterwards, at the Scala (February 1, 1901) he directed a full Verdi program, assisted by a chorus of a hun-

dred singers and an orchestra of a hundred musicians. Between the first and the second parts of the concert the poet Giuseppe Giacosa spoke in commemoration of the composer. The musical program was as follows:

Part One

1. *Nabucco* Overture
2. Chorus of the Crusaders, from Act One of *The Lombards at the First Crusade*
3. *Rigoletto*, Quartet from Act Four
Mmes Brambilla and Ghibauda, Messrs. Caruso and Arcangeli

Part Two

4. *Traviata*, Prelude to Act Three
5. *I Vespri Siciliani*, Overture
6. *Un Ballo in Maschera*, Duet from Act Two
7. *La Forza del Destino*, Duet from Act Four
Messrs. Tamagno and Coletti
8. *La Forza del Destino*, Finale from Act Three
Mme Pinto, M. Lupi, and Chorus

Carnival and Lent 1902

Operas: Wagner's *Die Walküre*; Verdi's *Il Trovatore*; Franchetti's *Germania*; Donizetti's

TOSCANINI AT THE SCALA

Linda di Chamounix; Weber's *Euryanthe*;
Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*; Verdi's
Requiem Mass.

Ballets: Marenco's *Amor*.

In April of the same year Toscanini conducted another series of concerts with the Scala Orchestral Society.

First Concert—April 13

1. Overture to *Midsummer Night's Dream* Mendelssohn
 2. Concerto in A, for violin and orchestra Sinigaglia
- Arrigo Serato
3. Symphonic Variations Dvořák
 4. *Till Eulenspiegel* Strauss
 5. Prelude to *Die Meistersinger* Wagner

Second Concert—April 20

1. Overture to *Der Freischütz* Weber
 2. Ninth Symphony Beethoven
- Soloists: Mmes Silvestri and Cernuschi, Messrs.
Borgatti and Nicoletti

Third Concert—April 25

1. Ninth Symphony Beethoven
- Soloists as above

2. Allegro from Concerto for piano and orchestra
..... Da Venezia
Ernesto Consolo at the piano

Fourth Concert—April 27

1. Ninth Symphony Beethoven
Soloists as above

Carnival and Lent 1903

Operas: Berlioz's *Damnation of Faust* (first time in Italy); Verdi's *Luisa Miller*; Smareglia's *Oceana*; Franchetti's *Asrael*; Ponchielli's *I Lituani*; Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera*; Wagner's *Parsifal*.

Ballets: Manzotti's *Rolla*; Hemelsberger's *Meissner Porzellan* (*Porcelains of Meissen*); Ganne's *In Japan*.

During the last series of this season the tenor Giovanni Zenatello was a featured member of the singing company. In the course of a performance of *Un Ballo in Maschera* one night, the prolonged applause for his aria "*È Scherzo od è Follia*" seemed to demand an encore. This Toscanini opposed. He had already made known through the press that, inas-

much as encores seemed to him to be in bad taste and deleterious to the rest of the performance, none would be allowed when he conducted. But on this occasion there were audible protests from the auditorium—protests which grew in volume the more evident it became that they were not to be answered. The intrepid Toscanini stood fanning himself violently with his handkerchief and waiting. But when the storm grew to hurricane size, he at last lost patience, stopped the fanning, dropped his baton, left the platform, and quit the opera-house by the service entrance. Hatless, coatless, in full dress—sweating and fuming in the cold night—he hurried through the frozen streets of Milan and went straight home and to bed, where his pursuers found him soon after, cooling himself in his usual way, and absolutely adamant to any plea for his return.

That night the stage-manager had to appear before the curtain to announce that a severe hæmorrhage had made it impossible for Toscanini to continue the performance, and that his place would be taken during the remaining two acts by his substitute, Signor Sormani. The officers of the Scala were quite

confident that everything would be made up without difficulty on the following day. There was much in their position, but—at six the next morning Toscanini left for Genoa and sailed immediately for Buenos Aires.

After this incident the concerts slated for April and May were turned over to Giuseppe Martucci, the only musician in the country who could approach Toscanini's level as conductor. The operatic season that followed (1904) was put under the direction of Cleofonte Campanini.¹

In June 1905 Toscanini returned to Milan as conductor of the Municipal Orchestra of Turin, a body of one hundred and twenty spirited and trained musicians. There he inaugurated the new Symphony Society, presided over by the Scala's chief officer, Count Guido Visconti di Modrone. Somewhat later he travelled with the Turin Symphony Society; and afterwards resumed his conductorship at Milan, where on March 20, 1906, at the Teatro Lirico, he aroused his audience to a high pitch of enthusiasm with the first performance in Italy of Strauss's symphonic poem *Don Juan*.

¹ See Appendix B.

TOSCANINI AT THE SCALA

Teatro Lirico

Tuesday, March 20, 1906, at 8:45

ONLY CONCERT

to be given by the Municipal Orchestra of Turin

120 musicians

under the direction of Arturo Toscanini

PROGRAM

1. Mendelssohn . . Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
2. Brahms Second Symphony
3. Strauss *Don Juan*, symphonic poem
4. Borodin *On the Steppes of Central Asia*
5. Wagner . . Prelude, and Death of Isolde from the opera *Tristan und Isolde*

On the 5th of December 1905 (at the Comunale Opera-house in Bologna) Toscanini conducted the première of Vittorio Gnegchi's *Cassandra*—a work whose brilliant originality, although it failed utterly to please or impress the public, aroused great interest in Toscanini. The conductor's admiration becomes the more interesting in view of certain reflections cast on the opera three years later, after the presentation of Strauss's *Electra*. In March 1908, following the opening performance at Dresden, Professor

Tebaldini, writing in the *Rivista Italiana*, presented about fifty themes from *Cassandra*, side by side with an equal number of corresponding themes from *Electra*; these were accompanied by notes showing that in both operas the same themes, almost without exception, occurred in analogous situations. This study of Tebaldini's caused a stir in Europe at the time; but three years earlier Toscanini had been quite alone in noting the excellence of Gnegchi's score.

One might describe Toscanini's function as that of missionary, for he carries the word (the most significant word, that is) of every important school of music to his audiences in all parts of the world. At the Scala his matchless performances have graced a general program including almost all of Wagner's works and running the gamut from Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel* to Tschaikowsky's *Eugen Onegin* and Berlioz's *Damnation of Faust*; from Strauss's *Salome* to Charpentier's *Louise* (which Toscanini considers one of our age's real contributions to music); from Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* to Beethoven's *Fidelio*.²

² Played in 1927, for the centenary of the "Giant of Bonn."

CHAPTER EIGHT

New York, 1908, to New York, 1920

DURING THE SEASON OF 1907-8 THE FAMOUS CONDUCTORIAL baton was to be seen in action on the rostrum of the Metropolitan Opera-house in New York City. Invested with full power of command, so that he might attain the same artistic perfection here as at the Scala, he was abetted in all his work by the new general manager, Giulio Gatti-Casazza. This collaboration, it was hoped, would make the Metropolitan a worthy rival of the world's best opera-houses.

And, indeed, the events that immediately followed easily established, as well as made memorable, America's coming of age in music. The Metropolitan quickly rose to a front place on the Olympus of its kind, and Europe was compelled to accept America on equal terms as far as artistic achievements were concerned.

One of the most outstanding events under the regime of Toscanini and Gatti-Casazza was the première of the *Fanciulla del West*, composed by Puccini to a script adapted from David Belasco's play *The Girl of the Golden West*. The composer had written it for performance under Toscanini's direction, feeling sure that America would welcome it and rank it along with his other successes. As for the performance, Toscanini based his interpretation on certain facts shown him by his early studying of the score. In the first place, he recognized the composer's desire to harmonize his technique with the modern trend in operatic writing, especially as evidenced in late French and Russian works. He understood, furthermore, that the music of the *Fanciulla* was to be distinguished from that of the other Puccinian operas

by its realistic character, as, for instance, in descriptions of locale and comments on the dramatic situations. To attain his perfect comprehension of the work he did not throw himself solely upon his instinctive reactions to the music, which might, after all, have set up other currents of judgment. He himself states that when he attacks a new problem of interpretation, there is a preliminary phase of mental elaboration, followed immediately by an illuminating intuitive phase, in which the general interpretative plan begins to outline itself. It is not until that plan is clear that he begins his long and meticulous research into the details of means and manner for following it out.

The *Fanciulla's* first-night was a gala affair. Americans are habitually enthusiastic about premières, and on this occasion the excitement was especially great since New York was now for the first time called upon to judge the work of a famous composer. Puccini and Toscanini were both popular favourites in America, and, to top it all, Emmy Destinn and Caruso were singing the leading roles in the opera. The interior of the theatre, hung with Italian

and American flags, was the scene set for a great occasion. From first curtain to last the audience watched the play unfold in rapt attention, applauded to the echo, and called and re-called the composer and his associates—Toscanini, Belasco, and Gatti-Casazza.

The other great event of Toscanini's New York season was the première of *Madame Sans-Gêne*, Umberto Giordano's new opera, based on Sardou's comedy of the same name. This took place on January 26, 1915, before a public whose interest in the opera and whose anxiety to see it had only been increased by the many postponements of its early-announced première. These delays so disturbed Gatti-Casazza that his comedy finally took on a tragic look for him; but the proverbially scrupulous Toscanini was tranquil, explaining that he had wanted to give the opera long and careful study before performing it. When, however, the presentation was finally made, it proved a laudable achievement both in execution and in staging. The fact that Toscanini directed it is explanation enough; the life-giving wizard's interpretation of the opera was flawless. As for the *mise-en-scène*,

it, too, was superb. It must have been hard for poor Giordano to have to stay shut up in Italy while perhaps the most magnificent *Madame Sans-Gêne* of his lifetime was being performed in New York. At the end of the opening performance, even before the curtain was lowered, that elegant and passionately eloquent music drew a salvo of applause from the audience. Nor was the clapping dimmed by the interposition of a curtain. It continued and the calls were redoubled until Toscanini, Geraldine Farrar, Martinnelli, Amato, and the scenic director, Speak, had appeared before the footlights, one by one. Certainly the interpretation had been worthy of the music's beauty. Toscanini was justly the hero of the occasion. Nor could one fail to recognize that the brilliance and crystal clarity of the music were products of his art, and that he had succeeded in enlivening all the musical figures and bringing them within the comprehension of all his listeners. Was it not Toscanini who made the critics see traits of freshness in *Madame Sans-Gêne* such as they had never found in any of Giordano's other works?

* * *

When, in 1915, the war broke out in Italy, Toscanini felt compelled to return to his native country, and so, not long after the première of *Madame Sans-Gêne*, he took leave of the Metropolitan and, temporarily, of America. Once back in Italy, he dedicated himself entirely to the Italian cause in the war, giving memorable proofs of patriotism and contributing, although by no means rich, himself, more generously than many wealthier persons. On the occasion of the taking of Monte Santo, Toscanini was at the front in search of his one son, enlisted in the Italian army. He who had already heartened the Italian troops with the music of patriotic songs as they advanced on Vodice, now led the hymns of the Italian *Risorgimento* and encouraged the soldiers under fire of the enemy artillery amid the ruins of the Monte Santo convent.¹

On the evening of July 25, 1915 forty thousand people attended Toscanini's great patriotic concert in the Milan Arena. Fifteen hundred performers (including the chorus and orchestra) took part in this demonstration. The program was composed entirely of selections from the works of the master who

¹ For this he was later decorated with the silver medal for valour.

had once stood as a symbol of Italy's redemption from the foreign yoke—Giuseppe Verdi. These excerpts were: the Symphony from *La Forza del Destino*; chorus from *Attila*, sung by eighty soprano voices; “*Va pensiero*” from *Nabucco*; “*O Signore dal tetto natio*” from *I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata* (*The Lombards at the First Crusade*); and the *Hymn of the Nations*.

The Arena, horseshoe-shaped, after the style of the antique Roman theatres, was equipped with a specially constructed stage for the chorus and soloists; the orchestra was placed just below this, and there were two platforms for the director, one before the chorus and another before the orchestra. From time to time Toscanini would spring catlike from his place below the upper platform, address the vast choral mass from close by for a moment or two, and then return to the lower rostrum, unflustered, without having missed a note.

When the *Hymn of the Nations*, which came at the end of the concert, reached the motif of Mameli (popular hero of the *Risorgimento*), the audience, responding to that stirring call and to the whole mean-

ing of the occasion, took up the notes themselves and sang with the chorus to the end. By now the electric lights had been dimmed, and everyone, as though by intuitive agreement, twisted his newspaper into a torch and lit it, holding it aloft, a bright, increasing symbol of his hope. Then Toscanini, without concealing his deep emotion, turned to face the self-improvised choristers and, leading them with his baton, joined the song himself.

Toscanini's next step during the war was to organize and conduct a series of concerts behind the fighting lines; immediately after those, he directed a "lyric" season at the Dal Verme Opera-house.

Between September 8 and November 28, 1915 he conducted forty-two performances at Milan, with such distinguished performers in his casts as Enrico Caruso—brought over from America expressly for the occasion. Among the operas in the season's programs were: Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* (twice performed); Wolf Ferrari's *Segreto di Susanna* (*The Secret of Suzanne*; twice performed); Puccini's *La Tosca* (twice); Verdi's *Traviata*, *Ballo in Maschera*,

and *Falstaff* (performed eight, six, and seven times respectively). This series, which had been devised to offset serious financial difficulties in which the opera-house was involved, netted 379,000 lire, in those days an almost fantastically large sum.

On the 30th of January 1916 Toscanini made an appearance at the Augusteo in Rome, conducting Haydn's Fourth Symphony (first performance in that auditorium), Elgar's *Symphonic Variations*, Busoni's *Elegiac Lullaby*, Rachmaninoff's *Isle of the Dead*, and Martucci's *Tarantella*. This was followed by a second concert (February 6), for which Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony, *Saga* by Jean Sibelius, and an ingenious transcription of Stravinsky's *Petrouchka* made up the program.

Toscanini would have ended his Roman visit after the second concert, but in view of the tremendous interest his music had aroused, the management of the Augusteo begged him to remain for a third "concert extraordinary." Toscanini agreed to stay and, on February 9, conducted three request numbers from the preceding programs (the Haydn symphony,

Petrouchka, and the Elgar *Variations*), to which were added the Overture from *The Barber of Seville* and Handel's *Largo* and *Minuet*.

Most important of all the concerts Toscanini conducted during the war was a series held in the Milan Conservatory during the winter of 1918. These formed a sort of grand review of international symphonic writing—a review magnificently and intelligently organized and effectively carried out under the guidance of the great *maestro*.

Late in 1920 Toscanini and an orchestra of his own choosing made an unforgettable six months' tour through Italy and the United States, giving in all one hundred and twenty-four concerts, which crowded upon each other feverishly, without a break. There were three phases in the tour—first came a series of concerts in Italy, then in the United States, then in Italy again.

At last an old dream of the *maestro's* was coming true. Here was an orchestra of picked musicians, stimulated by no empty mirage. Its tireless leader had fashioned of it an instrument to serve the new Scala magnificently, to quicken torpid traditions, to

prove once for all that Italy is not merely a land of singers (however warranted this pre-eminence), but that Italian musicians, if they will but make the effort, need be second to none in the matter of symphonic music.

Preparations went on in the conservatory in Milan. Experienced musicians from every corner of Italy responded to Toscanini's summons; performers of high rank were willing to enroll modestly in an orchestra destined to glorify, under the most valiant of leaders, the name of Italian art, first at home, then abroad. And these men, leaving positions of command in other orchestras for the rank and file of Toscanini's, were all spurred by a more disinterested motive than mere professional pride. There surged through them a new and vital force: the artistic genius of Arturo Toscanini. They knew that the *maestro* had studied them and chosen them one by one. They felt his faith in them and were eager to respond to the best of their abilities, obeying the slightest order out of a keen sense of responsibility, a will to act in the service of beauty, a certain sense of patriotism.

The backbone, the nucleus, of Toscanini's orches-

tra was this group: Ranzato, violin; Pavovic, concert-master; Koch, viola; Crepas, 'cello; Billet, double-bass; Brugnoli, flute; Serafin, oboe; Cancellieri, clarinet; Bertone, bassoon; Ceccarelli and Liverani, cornets; Botti, trumpet; Montanari, trombone.

But Toscanini did not depend on either strength of numbers or skill of musicians alone, in moulding the new orchestra to his patterns. He saw to it that the brasses were instruments of full and rich tone. Supported by the Scala Association, he had trombones specially constructed for enhanced tonal quality. And just as Toscanini projected and achieved greater vigour and resonance through this innovation, so by introducing dual-keyed horns he attained greater dependability in the execution of rough passages.

His material ready, Toscanini now began the modelling. At the laborious daily rehearsals he tried to eliminate the slight flaws, half imperceptible, half inevitable in a fresh and sensitive instrument. Toscanini's aim was perfect intonation, impeccable balance; but above everything else beauty and clarity of tone. For it is these qualities which make possible the

effective playing of delicate elaborations of theme. Pliant throats are needed for an expressive song. The melodic pattern must never be overlaid with slight, acrid sounds, but must maintain the full vibrational purity of its indicated tones. In Toscanini's orchestra the second violins came up to the standard set by the first; thus fell an old and pernicious distinction. Fortified by these principles, Toscanini's ninety-eight performers could attack any score without risk of ruining it.

The members of the Symphony Society were to savour the first-fruits of this work in a group of three "première" concerts. Thanks to co-operation between the municipal Government and the Scala Association, popular concerts followed later. While the programs contained certain of the major classical works, they held a foreshadowing of the new age, for Toscanini's opinions on this point are emphatic. He insists on due representation for the younger composers, even if their work appears excessively daring or even frankly unsound to the masses. Art has certain supreme claims to which the interpreter must bow, even at the cost of his own reactions. On the other hand,

there may be in a partially imperfect work elements to justify its public performance.

Among the more salient novelties that won Toscanini's approval were the following compositions: Respighi's *Danza delle Gnomidi*; the Intermezzo from Lualdi's opera *La Figlia del Re*; Sinigaglia's *Piemonte*; Bloch's *Dance*; Malipiero's *Illustrazioni di un Poema Cavalleresco*.

The first stage of the Italian-American tour—which was not to be completed until the return from America—took Toscanini and his orchestra through the leading cities of Italy: Como, Bergamo, Cremona, Alessandria, Turin, Genoa, Florence, Bologna, Reggio, Parma, Piacenza, Brescia, Verona, Venice, Trento, Trieste. It was organized under the auspices of a committee headed by the Mayor of Milan and Signor Ugo Finzi. The Touring Club made all travelling-arrangements. In conclusion, Toscanini accepted an invitation from Fiume. Gabriele d'Annunzio, who was then at Fiume in an attempt to give substance to the dream of Ronchi, attested to the pleasure aroused by this visit of Toscanini's in a letter of November 25, 1920:

"My beloved and great brother in art,

"You have left us only infinite sorrow. My torment is sharper after the respite. I am sending you some pages in which you will find a few words of mine. These two speeches, with the addition of a third, could easily be issued in a pamphlet, if you wished. Salvatore Lauro is a publisher of excellent taste, as well as my loyal friend. He is the publisher of —'s portrait. Dearest of great brothers, when shall we two meet again? What is to come?

"I have no mercy on myself and no one has mercy on me.

"My deeply felt greetings to you and your family.

Gabriele d'Annunzio"

Without Toscanini no such orchestra as this one of his could ever have taken shape. He is all harmony, order, precision. Those traits which make each interpretation a masterpiece of logic, criticism, clarity, integrity, were the very traits that guided his selection of individual musicians. Those qualities he used in achieving perfect harmony of execution led him in choosing the elements most readily harmonized. Once the materials were selected, they had to be fused. And this fusion, this harmony, had to extend to the relation between orchestra and conductor.

Toscanini utilized every resource at his disposal—not excluding that resource inherent in the sound of the instruments themselves—in the achievement of technical co-ordination. Here his sensitiveness, his accurate musical perception, equal to detecting the slightest unevenness of intonation, was brought into full play. Toscanini's ear had always rebelled against harsh-voiced instruments, against thin tones, against wavering timbres. He demanded rounded tones from his percussion instruments. He would not tolerate the slightest inferiority in the second violins as compared with the first, since such inferiority diluted the richness of tone and clouded the effect of the strings as a whole. He insisted that his wind-instruments be played by young lips, firm and supple in tone control, by rich and pliant throats well trained in proper tone production.

Then, after harmony of sound, must come harmony of intention between himself and his orchestra, so that his aim, his vision, his point of view, might become the aim, the vision, the point of view of his performers. It involved infusing a spirit (his spirit) into his ninety-eight musicians.

Just as the pianist expresses his most secret self through his touch upon the keys, so Toscanini used his incomparable power of communication as the touch upon his orchestra through which he might express his own innermost feelings. To attend one of his rehearsals is to gain some idea of this extraordinary power of communication. Each is a lesson rather than a rehearsal; for Toscanini's instruction, measured and precise, infallible in its comprehension of people and things, involves far more than mere correction of technical details. He is gifted with a prodigious memory. In rehearsing a Beethoven composition he begins by expounding not only his own reactions, but also what Berlioz and Wagner considered distinguished and characteristic in the work. Even where Toscanini's interpretation seems wholly subjective, he expresses it in objective terms based on general observations of a vividly poetic colour, but aroused always by some point he alone has observed.

Step by step the new orchestra felt itself drawn into the sphere of his emotion and vision; it became a unit in which the will of one was the will of all. Time

after time the mists enveloping the most profound or complex of works would be lifted, and a smile of contentment flicker over Toscanini's face. He was satisfied with the playing of his musicians.

The first public performance with the new orchestra came on October 23; the program consisted of the Beethoven Fifth Symphony, Debussy's *Iberia*, Wagner's *Prelude* and the "Liebestod" from *Tristan und Isolde*. The audience looked upon this concert as an epoch-making event—perfection in music, in orchestra, in conductor. According to the critic of the *Corriere della Sera*, Toscanini, "the best conductor of our day," was scaling heights hitherto undreamed of; dedicating the sensitiveness of his art, the fire of his imagination, to the creation of this orchestra.

The second concert in Milan, with a richly varied program—the Manfredini *Concerto Grosso*, Respighi's *Ballata delle Gnomidi*, and the Beethoven and Wagner selections of the previous concert—aroused equal enthusiasm from press and public. Signor Gaetano Cesari, in reviewing the concert, spoke of the emergence of that æsthetic phenomenon which Nietzsche characterized as the two stages in

musical evolution: that which the Greeks called “*ethos*” (represented in this instance by the Manfredini *Concerto*), and that which they called “*pathos*” (represented by the Wagner compositions), with Toscanini touching the very peak of expressive power in a night of triumph.

There is no need for spinning endless eulogies or reviewing each of Toscanini’s concerts in detail; it is obvious that an unvaried plane of unconditional rapture must greet them. The superb organization was endowed with the magnetism of an art into which Toscanini had breathed the breath of greatness.

Eclecticism did not daunt Toscanini. He realized that in music two contrasting elements (as, for example, Strauss and Debussy) not only do not neutralize each other, but, on the contrary, fuse into an æsthetic whole, provided there is embedded in each of them some spark of “that eternal beauty which can eternally glow and never be spent.” Some conductors—Toscanini for one—can sense what greatness and variety there is in a composition. When he must select a work by a new composer or attack the exceptional composition, he never misses the part that will

harmonize with the other compositions on the program. And all the contrasting numbers in a Toscanini concert are clearly blocks in a pattern, never the random accretion of materials.

So after Schubert's Unfinished Symphony, refreshing as a jet of purest water, will come Strauss's *Don Quixote*, whimsical and captivating. Debussy's fastidious and unalloyed impressionism in *Nuages* and *Fêtes* serves as foil to the romantic exuberance of the Strauss poem or the sharply rhythmic sonority of the *Ride of the Valkyries*.

Toscanini's success in this felicitous combination of varied types of music is based on two factors: first, on unqualified control over all the technical musical problems involved in every score; second, on comprehension of the varying shadings of the composer's mood, gay, ironic, sublime, pathetic.

The next concert of the Milan group, on October 30, brought the Mozart Symphony Thirty-nine, in E flat, the Elgar *Variations*, Sinigaglia's *Suite Piemonte*, the *Tannhäuser* overture. Another program in Milan consisted of Respighi's transcriptions of *Antiche Danze ed Arie per Liuto*, the "Interludio del Sogno"

from Lualdi's *Figlia del Re*, then Ernest Bloch's *Dance* and Tommasini's *Serenate*, the Beethoven Seventh Symphony, and the Good Friday music from *Parsifal*.

The Milan concerts were interpolated between visits to other Italian cities, and on November 16 Toscanini returned to that city to take leave of the Milanese public in a last concert before his departure for America. The Beethoven Fifth Symphony had become so closely associated with Toscanini's name that its inclusion in his farewell concert seemed symbolic. The overture to the *Meistersinger* lent a massive close to the occasion. Each superb composition, so superbly rendered, brought a new ovation, more enthusiastic than ever, since this was the farewell of Toscanini and his musicians to Milan and Italy.

Perhaps success was not particularly difficult in Italy, where the exceptional qualities of Toscanini's orchestra could not help shining in comparison with the standard set by the average orchestra. But conditions were wholly different in America, which, thanks to its financial resources and its powerful symphony societies, can monopolize the best performers

of any country. Here he would have to face comparison! But Toscanini did not dread comparison, and his confidence was justified.

On November 27, 1920 Toscanini and the members of his orchestra sailed for New York on the *Presidente Wilson*. The Italian Government helped defray the enormous expense involved in the crossing. The United States Government would put a special train at the disposal of the Toscanini group for the entire duration of the American tour, which was to open with a performance at the Metropolitan Opera-house, with two other New York engagements to be interpolated between concerts in Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, and other leading cities.

Once in the United States, the days from the thirteenth to the eighteenth of December were devoted to phonograph recordings, in response to the insistence of his friends, who were anxious to have his interpretations immortalized in this fashion. The phonograph recordings took place in a cramped room, so that the sound might be properly concentrated. Such a room could not hold the eighty musicians, and to compensate for their reduced numbers, the per-

formers were forced to play in an unbroken *fortissimo*: a most unfortunate circumstance, in that many subtleties peculiarly Toscanini's own will be for ever lost. Moreover, Toscanini was forced to forego his customary snatches of song and his verbal proddings for fear his voice would be recorded above the music, a distressing sacrifice to a conductor who ordinarily brings into play every medium to express his interpretation.

Since the disks could record no piece of music requiring over four and a half minutes, certain compositions in Toscanini's repertory were automatically eliminated. He stipulated that every recording must be submitted to him for his approval, so that the performance of each number was followed almost immediately by a trial of the record disk; if Toscanini did not find the record satisfactory, the selection had to be repeated even to the ninth or tenth time.

But by December 18 this torture was over and ten days later the concert series opened, at the Metropolitan Opera-house. The audience was swept to its feet in its enthusiasm for Toscanini and his musicians.

Four programs were given during the Italian

tour; five in America. Toscanini included De Sabata's *Juventus*, Dvořák's *New World*, Berlioz's *Hungarian March*. As a rule, each concert in America ended, as in Italy, with the *William Tell* overture or the overture to the *Vespri Siciliani*, or with the prelude to the *Meistersinger* or the finale from *Tristan*. But the compositions that produced the deepest impression in America were Beethoven's Fifth and Seventh Symphonies, Elgar's *Variations*, Debussy's *Iberia*, all the Wagner selections, and the music of the younger Italian composers.

Toscanini's individual, novel, bold reading of the Beethoven Fifth Symphony aroused spirited discussion. Kreisler broke out, in a group of musicians, with the words: "I don't believe Toscanini is wrong. But even if he were, I should rather hear it wrongly played by Toscanini than correctly by anyone else." Among authoritative judgments may be mentioned Bodanzky's "Toscanini is the conductors' conductor," and Monteux's "We are all mere striplings compared to him." Not one of the distinguished musicians in all North America hesitated to render homage, oral or written, to their Italian guest.

Toscanini, so sensitive to proofs of affection, was particularly moved by tributes from the Italians in America. Compatriots travelled hundreds of miles to hear his orchestra. They crowned their ovations with the cry of "*Evviva l'Italia!*" The conductor might justly be called an ambassador of Italianism; no more effective and dignified propaganda than his music could have been disseminated in America.

The orchestra reached the zenith of its success in Boston, although that city is the home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, long directed by Muck, and considered the finest in the world. There press and public heaped honours on Toscanini's orchestra. Headlines read: "Enthusiastic applause greets Toscanini"; "Ovations hitherto unheard paid to orchestra and conductor"; "Toscanini's art arouses vast audience to enthusiasm." Perhaps, however, the most thunderous, most exuberant ovation came from seven thousand listeners at the Hippodrome in New York.

The train that carried the orchestra on its tour was composed of two baggage cars for the instruments, two coaches for the musicians, and a suite of two rooms with a piano for the director. The train

was marked "Scala Orchestra." The performers complained, cheerfully enough, that they had not a moment's rest. Almost every day, between concert and travel, brought its reception by a symphony society or an Italian organization. Enthusiastic crowds surged about them at railway stations. Toscanini's luggage grew with the addition of endless silver loving-cups; lavish gifts streamed in—he would have appreciated the thought more than the bulky gift!

Angelo Scandiani, as representative of the Scala, accompanied Toscanini during the first part of the tour and was of particular assistance in establishing contracts with conductors and singers involving engagements for the opening season of the new Scala. Even the most distinguished Italian artists, on hearing of the Scala and Toscanini, were seized with homesickness and contemplated returning to Italy, in spite of the financial losses involved in exchanging American salaries for Italian.

Toscanini had planned to leave America on March 19, arriving in Naples on April 5. After a number of concerts in Naples and Rome he was to embark on a European tour: London, Paris, Madrid,

Barcelona, Marseilles, Bordeaux. This was to be followed by another Italian tour. Toscanini hoped to rest from June to September. The months of September and October were to be devoted to selecting the permanent personnel of the Scala orchestra for the opera season.

But the success of this Italian orchestra in the United States was so dazzling that they lingered on until the twenty-seventh in order to fulfil the countless insistent requests for additional concerts. Instead of three New York concerts there were ten; two of them at the Hippodrome drew an audience of eight thousand persons apiece. The ovation paid to Toscanini and his musicians was unforgettable. The fusion of individual musical skill, the introduction of new compositions, won particular interest. Toscanini's innovations held not merely the piquancy of novelty. Here was the best of the new balanced against the best of the old with an incredible perfection in execution.

Because of this postponement Toscanini could not sail until April 3. He reached Naples on April 18, 1921. A few days later he conducted a concert at

the San Carlo Opera-house. Tireless as ever, after so brief a rest, he continued that Italian tour which had been interrupted by the American trip. On April 23 came two concerts at the Constanzi Opera-house. Then the orchestra stopped at Florence, Modena, Parma, Bergamo—a triumphal tour, with Toscanini once more reaping laurels as the supreme, the adored, the heroic among musicians. Then came Milan again, the Teatro Lirico, with old favourites in music, the *Fontane di Roma*, *William Tell*, the sparkle of Sinigaglia's overture to the *Baruffe Chiozzotte*, the powerful and limpid sonority of *Death and Transfiguration*, the poetry of the *Siegfried Idyll*, the romantic lyricism of the Unfinished Symphony, the shimmering colours of the *Nuages* and *Fêtes*. So thunderous was the applause that Toscanini for once was forced to give an encore, the *Meistersinger* overture.

Toscanini had come home. The cycle of that magnificent enterprise launched for the glory of Italian music closed, as it had begun, in Milan.

CHAPTER NINE

The New Scala

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE ITALIAN PARTICIPATION in the war the activities of the Scala were brusquely interrupted, and its functions of a mother opera-house, from which all others (including many abroad) learned their manners, came apparently to an end. This was an occasion of some seriousness to the Milanese, who from the time Piermarino's plans had taken shape on the site of the destroyed Church of Santa Maria alla Scala (in what was then called the

Nuovo Regio Ducal Opera-house) had recognized in the Scala the most magnificent possible edifice for the housing of the music-spectacle.

It was true, to be sure, that the size of the hall and the proportions of the stage could not have been increased without altering the absolutely perfect acoustics. But in those early days there would have been no need for such change; a different style prevailed in opera, people had more moderate and differently oriented tastes. Today the theatre runs an increasingly tense and feverish career. The taste of the public at large is more refined; scenic equipment grows steadily richer and more complicated, modern demands make new and elaborate lighting and heating plants, and up-to-date devices of all sorts, absolutely indispensable. So Piermarino's magnificent salon came to look like a poor sort of makeshift, in spite of its perfect stage. Until 1915, notwithstanding these many lacks, the Scala lived a vigorous enough life. The operatic seasons followed one another dressed in such scenic grandeur that even visiting foreigners, accustomed to modernly tricked-out theatres, with room to spare for services and acces-

sories, spoke with sincere admiration of the Scala.

But with the beginning of the war all activity had been stopped. Could the prestige of the most renowned municipal art-institution in Italy be left hanging in the balance? The appeal to save the Scala came from those who saw a heritage of Italian glory in the old opera-house and wanted it sustained in the present and preserved for the future, no less for the sake of the magnificent Scala performances yet to be given than for the rich tradition embodied in its name. That appeal was not made in vain. Thirty patrons were enough to make the liberally subscribed fund mount to six million lire, and in the end the theatre was rich enough to install the necessary service and equipment and to systematize itself once for all as a *repertory opera-house* of the first order. It could, in other words, at last embrace without difficulty as wide and varied a repertory of production as it chose. The new warehouses, scenic properties, and up-to-date mechanical devices were such as to have made it possible to select and prepare at short notice the material for a season of seventy performances, with a change of presentation each night.

The Scala Association saw at once that if plans for the future were to be kept in harmony with this perfect systematization it would rest upon them to complete the enterprise so solidly begun, in the same broad spirit and lofty conception of the artistic and social function of the opera-house as had attended its founding. To become a repertory theatre meant to throw off the shabby cloak of traditional manners and interrupt the fossilizing process that the Scala had undergone owing to its various unfilled wants. If the march of presentations was to be roused from its old drugged sleepiness, the officers would have to look beyond the new material riches for an animating spirit to set the whole thing in motion. The donors themselves had known that, in addition to their money, the Scala would need the hand of a great man for its artistic direction, and now the same name seemed on every tongue. There was only one person, after all, in whom the requisite qualities of high musicianship, authority, organizing-power, and will were concentrated.

A few days after the nomination the committee reached its decision, and the appointment was made.

Toscanini at once assumed the musical directorship of the opera-house and began his task of recruiting a stable orchestra. As regarded the projected improvements in the hall itself, Toscanini's chief concern was to prevent any alteration of Piermarino's perfect acoustics. Choosing the *Lohengrin* prelude as an infallible detector (because of its delicate harmonies and contrapuntal effects), he insisted on hearing the selection played in the auditorium after every slightest change made there by the builders.

At last the *maestro* was in "his" theatre again. Indeed, since his first very youthful appearance there in 1896, the Scala had always been his natural environment; the hall seemed even to have a certain sway over him, to arouse him to the highest pitch of energy and to awaken his richest moods. He had paid full tribute of his genius there so many times! Even Piermarino's flawless walls were full of old, familiar echoes for him when he came again.

For the first performance at the new Scala, Toscanini had selected Verdi's *Falstaff*, as having a double appropriateness; it not only would serve to show off the new features of the opera-house to best

advantage, but would stand as an act of homage to the father of the modern Italian music-drama. And the opera went into rehearsal.

Those who both saw and knew lived now in increasing wonder at the sudden patience and adaptability of the inscrutable conductor. Was this the Toscanini who, in normal circumstances, had never been able to tolerate an uncalled-for sound, and who had always compelled his musicians to tune their instruments before coming on the stage? Now, when it was impossible to find a room for the most important rehearsals—when workmen and ladders and paints and planes were scattered about in all the likeliest places—Toscanini and a group of musicians would meekly take refuge in the little atrium between the corridor and the hall. There they would all stand up, with the conductor in the centre, and go over and over the bad passages. There was a secondary retreat in the green-room on the first floor; here, in accordance with one of his basic rules, the *maestro* always rehearsed the principal singers, expounding the dramatic characters of the opera for them, describing the moods of particular episodes, and teaching them

new poses and gestures and variations of expression.

The workmen had succeeded in covering everything in sight with a ten-year mantle of grime; and three vacuum pumps were kept busy constantly, sucking up clouds of dust from the boxes, the orchestra-chairs, and the wainscoting. Meanwhile men were slapping fresh paint on all the walls, carpenters were pounding in nails by hundreds from the roof to the cellar, and electricians were underfoot and overhead everywhere, juggling busily with colours, drowning the stage in brilliant reds and yellows and greens, pushing plugs in, and pulling plugs out. The permanent and movable lighting apparatus, looking exactly like a series of hand-grenades to the uninitiate eye, hung aloft between suspended bits of scenery, and the finished Fortuny cupola¹ dominated the whole scene.

The new steel curtain, which ordinarily would be used only in case of fire, did admirable service for Toscanini in those building days, by interposing

¹ A hollow chamber that gathers all the lights directed on it by the projectors and diffuses them over the stage reduced to a single, continuous stream, giving an almost perfect illusion of air circulating in light.

.....

a screen between the rehearsing orchestra and the rest of the auditorium. In the mean time, full-fisted hammer-blows rang in chorus at all times of day, on the stage as well as off.

He refused to admit it, but it was easy to see that the *maestro* was very well satisfied. He looked younger each day and fuller of fire; and he would stand in the auditorium rehearsing tirelessly for hours, scolding and correcting and wheeling about at a step to strain his near-sighted eyes in search of the suspected enemy—newspapermen. “One should never tell reporters anything; they have entirely too much imagination,” he growls. Whenever anyone tried to interview him he would say: “The Scala is going to reopen,” and close the conversation on that note. He was the proverbial man of deeds, not words, and all his attention was commanded by two worlds: *Falstaff*, and *Boris Godounov*. In spite of the vast complex of technical details—the mechanisms of lighting and staging—that had to be perfected for the opening performance, the conductor managed to see the whole thing through in time, by devising and following four separate time-schedules, utilizing morning, afternoon,

evening, and night; and treasuring the free hours of his chorus-members—mostly employees and labourers—who could be present only after lunch and again after supper. Thus *Falstaff* was made ready, and the evening of December 27 was reached at length.

There was about the whole occasion a certain air of renaissance, the delight in a prized recovery; an awakening of memories for some and a new enchantment for those who had not known the grandeur of the Scala in its early days. No reopening of a theatre had ever been looked forward to with such eagerness and long-fostered love. It was a re-consecration of the temple, a renewal of the endeared rites.

When the hour for the performance drew near, perfect silence descended on the hall. Toscanini entered and was greeted by a mighty hail of applause. The opening notes were played, the curtain rose on the scene at the Garter Inn—the burlesque adventures of Falstaff and his merry company were under way.

Had the problem of producing *Falstaff* been too complex for the conductor, single-handed? As the opera progressed, it became clearer, note by note, that the sensitive eye and ear, aided by the master-

ful hand of Toscanini, had produced one more triumph. He had worked without even the assistance of a stage-manager—but what was *that*? Swift to perceive musical relationships and meanings, trained, too, by his love for all the plastic arts in general and painting in particular, his judgment had been admirable in moulding the scenic effects, in attaining perfect diction from his singers, perfect coherence of movement and interplay between actions, words, and music. He had not stressed voices as such, any more than had Verdi when he assigned a leading role to Maurel, surrounding him with a cast chosen for their looks, not their vocal cords! And all his power, all the fire of his artist's temperament, had been centred on these ends: the temper of the score must not be misrepresented, nor the vivacity of the "merry wives" lag under a consuming preoccupation with entrance cues and promptings; the noisy vulgarity of Falstaff's swaggering henchmen must not run into a too shockingly realistic realism, nor the amorous echoes of Nanetta's and Fenton's singing seem to flow from operatic bombast rather than from youthful hearts.

Clarity and precision alike prevailed in the

orchestra. Its music was both an accompaniment to the comedy and an integral part of it. Stateliness of *mise-en-scène*, richness, consummate dignity, scrupulous artistry, and—Toscanini! As the curtain fell after each act, the audience clamoured for him; and so, after the second act, he consented to appear among the performers. A long-drawn “Oh!” of triumph greeted him. He fled. But when he mounted the rostrum for the last act, the audience took him unawares and overwhelmed him in a riot of enthusiasm. “Ah, now you won’t get away from us!” And Toscanini, wholly disarmed and unquestionably moved, continued to respond and the audience to applaud frenziedly.

In the foyer of the Scala there are marble tablets bearing in gold the names of the founders of the “Pro Scala” fund. One of these inscriptions reads: “N. N. 100,000 lire.”

Who is this Signor N. N.?

When the first Scala season under the new regime was over, the Scala Association held a meeting. Realizing that the splendid results of the year were due not only to financial support from donors, but

above all to Toscanini's efforts, the trustees were anxious to offer him some reward. After long discussion as to what form this reward should take, they agreed to send him a cheque for a hundred thousand lire, enclosed in a letter. The note was dispatched. Several hours later came a reply: a few laconic words explaining that the cheque was being returned. The *maestro* had only done his duty; he expected nothing in return; he deserved nothing; he wanted nothing.

The Association was disturbed. Inconceivable eccentric, to reject a hundred thousand lire! The unanimous decision of a whole organization fallen through, point-blank! What were they to do? They wrote another letter. They hoped they had not hurt Toscanini's feelings, but the offer had been spontaneous, sincere; his rejection embarrassed the Association, which would find it awkward to have to cancel its own unanimous vote. Off went the letter and the cheque again from the Piazza della Scala to the Via Durini. The Association marked time in trepidation. Back from the Via Durini to the Piazza della Scala came the cheque with yet another letter. "Very well," said Toscanini. "I accept the cheque; but with the

understanding that the money must go into the 'Pro Scala' fund and the donor remain anonymous."

And so on the following day the *Corriere della Sera* reopened its published list of contributions to the fund with a single item: "N. N., 100,000 lire."

CHAPTER TEN

Opera

THAT SAVOUR OF THE TRADITIONAL WHICH HAUNTS the very walls of the Scala seeped into Toscanini's spirit and fostered in him a cult of the past. Dino Bonardi has astutely pointed out that in Toscanini this "cult of the past" is not static and passive, but dynamic and active; it is a reflection of that deathless beauty which is eternally reborn and so for ever new. Toscanini's is a traditionalism compounded of the continuity of emotion, of the immortality of art,

of the changeless beauty reflected in a thousand scattered beauties.

In this sense Toscanini is responsive to the immortality of the traditional. He evokes the spirit of the past by tuning his interpretations to our alienated, varying responsiveness. There is no mist to dim his insight into the thought of an old composition; there is no voice too faint for him to hear. In each classic composition he reveals that core by which it once aroused emotion. In someone else's version a Vivaldi string concerto may seem an airy bauble, a little thin, polished; formal, but with a chilly and over-intellectualized formality. The same composition interpreted by Arturo Toscanini brings to life the echoes of a far-off world; until the last note dies, we are wrapped in a dream, but a dream vibrant with life, shot through with human emotions. It is as though on looking at a portrait by a Flemish painter one were to see some cavalier of a bygone day quicken suddenly to life against the dusky background of the canvas, step like a living figure from the frame, and take his place in our world, become one of us.

This capacity for bringing close to the percep-

tions of our day the spirit that imbued the works of the past is another virtue characteristic of Toscanini. It may be called his "contemporaneity." Since with the passage of time every art progressively enriches its faculty of expressing subtler, more individual, more impassioned moods, the modern public tends in general to feel a certain impatience in the face of older works. The modern public is ready to believe that its predecessors lacked the power to express their reactions, and even that they were deficient in technical equipment. So the interpreter is tempted to *complete* these old masters because he believes in the equivalence and similarity of all emotion. This is all false. For, as Nietzsche has remarked, the spirit of the old composers was a different spirit from ours. It may have been more profound; in any case it was colder, remote from the hectic life of our day. Measure, symmetry, contempt of the sensual, horror of the passionate—these conditioned the emotion and the ethic of all the old masters before Beethoven. They did not select, spiritualize, their mediums of expression arbitrarily, but necessarily, out of their very nature.

Granting this premise, Toscanini might wonder whether it were necessary to contest the right of this generation to project its own spirit into the works of dead generations. And his answer would be: "No." For it is only by this projection of our spirit into them that the old works live. It is our breath that gives them speech. To compel the old masters continually to yield themselves anew to life is to render them the deepest homage. Imagine one of them at a modern performance of his music. For a while he is apathetic, silent; but he may end by saying: "This is not I, nor is he utterly opposed to me. This is a third, who is not wholly right and yet is somewhat right. For I am no longer I, nor is this my old audience; but, as Schiller said: 'The living are always right.'"

"At the same time," concludes Dino Bonardi, "Toscanini possesses that rarest of arts, the art of reviving in the present the spirit of the past. This does not consist in duplicating past standards. That is in the province of restoration, impressive enough as *tour de force*, but inadequate as music. In music the interpretation must be bound up with the work, and the interpretation revealed at the same moment at

which the work is performed. Toscanini, in his 'contemporaneity,' proposes to recreate the old standards in their original purity, but at the same time to reveal points of contact between the reactions of the past and of the present. It is through these opened gateways that the spirit and the genius of the past flow into the present, sparks to set off the total and complete reaction patterns of the past. Through them the glories of discarded and derided works shine in a new light. The individual from whom the music flowed is dead; the inevitable gradual decline is spent; tradition, that reliquary of the original impulses of art (more powerful than any art), would end by quenching the music utterly if, from time to time, an artist were not to act as interpreter."

Toscanini reascends to the fountain-head from which the music once gushed, to restore to it untouched its dignity. The echoes of the past sing in his imagination as they once sang in reality. The life of the musical past lives again in him. He himself is an incomparable instrument of the most peerless renaissance, the most visionary resurrection of feeling and spirit. It is precisely this that constitutes Tosca-

nini's interpretative gift in classic music. The Toscanini revivals are all memorable: *The Marriage of Figaro* and *The Magic Flute* of Mozart; Weber's *Euryanthe* and *Freischütz*; Ponchielli's *Lituani*; Donizetti's *Elisir d'amore*, *Don Pasquale*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*; Verdi's *Luisa Miller*; Gluck's *Orpheus*; Auber's *Fra Diavolo*. Always the music and spirit are perfectly rendered because they are perfectly understood.

On the fiftieth anniversary of Manzoni's death, May 21, 1923, solemn memorial services were held everywhere. Toscanini, recalling that Verdi had written at Manzoni's death a requiem mass, the *Messa di Requiem*, which had been performed the year of the poet's death (to the nation, an irretrievable loss to Italian art; to Verdi, the loss of a friend), rehearsed and directed at the Scala a performance of this immortal composition by the "Swan of Busseto." "The tragic news of Manzoni's death," wrote Verdi, "impelled me to write this mass. It was a cry from the heart, a tribute of veneration, of reverent devotion, the expression of my great grief."

For Toscanini the emotions the composer had

felt on the death of the poet were renewed in performing the mass. He had directed it before, in 1901, at the Scala, on the death of Verdi himself. At certain moments the interpreter seemed to recall, consciously, that this work was born of "a cry from the heart." At other moments the measured, restrained, melancholy pace of the music recalled rather the sorrowful ritual for which the mass was written, and the homage it expressed.

The chorus of the Scala, supplemented by fifty voices from the opera-house choral school, assisted the orchestra in a performance marked throughout by harmony and soundness of effect.

Toscanini's triumphs in the field of orchestral music were no less striking than his operatic successes. Here, again, he showed the same sound eclecticism, ranging from the classic masters to the ultra-modern representatives of the neo-Russian school. Here, too, the very essence of his merit is his power of giving life to the music by interpreting it in accord with the dictates of his own sensitive temperament. In rehearsing a Beethoven symphony, for example, he is not content with a minute research into

all its details, shadings, thematic inversions, developments; the subtle effect of a certain harmony in the wood winds or the brasses, of a secondary, almost negligible rhythm, of a *legato*, a *staccato*. This is the groundwork of his interpretation, the first step in the reconstruction, detail by detail, unit by unit; the modelling of lights and shades in the musical picture as it existed in the composer's mind. But Toscanini must also know the meaning of each composition; that is, its cause, its life, its joys, its griefs, its moods, its most recondite thoughts. Toscanini's research does not involve the composition alone. He must know everything that pertains to the composer as an individual against the background of his place and time. Criticisms, biographies, scientific researches—psychological and æsthetic—Toscanini never feels that he knows enough. He steeps himself in the composition, breathes the very air Beethoven breathed, thinks the very thoughts Beethoven thought. He achieves a sort of dual personality, interpreter merged with composer. In reviving a piece of music he creates it anew. "We must go from the man to the work, and the work to the man." The lines of research are three: the

composer as individual, the work as typical, the work as individual. Otherwise we should be like Dionys Weber, who dubbed the *Eroica* a monstrosity ("And he was right at that!" exclaimed Wagner). Weber knew only the Mozartian *allegro* movement and had his pupils at the Prague Conservatory perform the *Eroica allegro* in the Mozart vein. For he was blind to the fact that Beethoven had far outstripped Mozart, not only in the technical form, but in the poetic and philosophic content of his work.

At the beginning of his career Toscanini had expressed great enthusiasm for the "new art" as exemplified in post-Wagnerism (whether Strauss or Debussy), even rejecting the Strauss of *Salome* so as not to mar the integrity of his allegiance to the Debussy of *Pelléas et Mélisande*. But the post-Wagnerian spring ran dry very early; aside from the three salient figures in the evolution of contemporary music—Dukas, Ravel, Elgar—no one seemed to have anything new to say, and therefore Toscanini transferred his interest across the gap intervening

from them to Pizzetti, Respighi, Sibelius, Bloch, Erlanger, De Sabata, Stravinsky.

Toscanini's insatiable spirit was nevertheless to find a new vent, new sources of satisfaction. He became self-critical. He no longer scrutinizes a score after a rehearsal in order to reassure himself that his execution was consistent with the composer's ideas or to fix certain passages more firmly in his memory. He studies Beethoven and Wagner again. He takes up the Fifth or the Seventh Symphonies, or the Good Friday music, or the death of Isolde in order to re-study these immortal pages as though they were quite new. He says that he used to "play them badly," that his former interpretations "must be corrected." The music of Beethoven's *Coriolanus* is one of his most annotated scores, all sprinkled with accents, shadings, comments. The middle section is marked "*agitato angoscioso*." Toscanini plunges so deep into the heart of the work, feels so much more than any orchestra can ever express, that he must confess: "I can never conduct *Coriolanus* as it ought to be played, because it is impossible to make the performers un-

derstand what this is all about, what tragic characters they represent. I conducted the overture many years ago, at Turin. It was not what I wanted. I have never conducted it again." His plastic sensitiveness and artistic integrity make him so self-conscious vis-à-vis to the great composers that he considers applause offensive.

It is through self-criticism that the human spirit is refined, modified. It is through their re-creation by self-criticism that the beauties of the true work of art are infinite as art itself. Pythagoras has said that "music is number"; Mozart signed himself "member of the guild of numbers." If Toscanini had studied the exact sciences, his stress on precision and his powers of analysis would have made him a distinguished mathematician. On the other hand, his vivid imagery, his flashes of insight, his figures of speech, are those of a poet. And, notwithstanding the remoteness, the shadowiness, of musical language, Toscanini's interpretations are bodied forth with a compelling clarity, for his perceptions have the vividness of a painter's perceptions. Toscanini invests the

world of dreams with the plasticity of the world of reality.

Self-critic that he is, how many comparisons, how many reflections, how much debating and wavering he experiences before venturing a single modification in the composer's idea, before he will permit his interpretation to differ from the version that a rigid traditionalism has rendered "authentic"! And yet a mere singer introduces trills and flourishes at his caprice, without any end but the display of his own virtuosity, even at the expense of the music he is singing.

The critic of the *Annuario Musicale* for 1913 wrote: "When Arturo Toscanini is on the rostrum, he defers only to the stern and lofty rule of art." That is why the singers he directs cannot indulge in licences which may display personal virtuosity, but compromise the work of art. Nevertheless, his sane judgment has often been received unfavourably, and he has sometimes even had to yield to the crude bias of an impresario or the presumptuous ignorance of a singer. He always centres his attention on the total

effect, convinced that he can achieve excellent performances even without the aid of the so-called "*divo*." He insists that the total effect be homogeneous, that all individuals submerge themselves to enhance it. "Fidelity to the work of art"—this might be said to be his motto. He wants to suppress the exhibitionism of individual performers, the desire to stand out as individuals from the pattern.

For example, during the war, in 1918, the most celebrated singers in Italy took part in a benefit concert held in the Arena at Milan. During the rehearsals of Verdi's *Inno delle Nazioni* each performer in a certain passage for eight tenors wanted to make his voice heard above the other seven. And Toscanini said: "I know each of you has a fine voice, but for the present won't you keep to the level of the others? After all, this is an octet, not eight solos!" The performance went wonderfully well; only the passage for eight tenors, "*divi*," was not what it might have been.

But, many times, what is only greater vividness in colouring, more marked precision in rhythm, can make fidelity to the author's intention seem instead

a modification. Puccini's *Manon* was presented at the Scala in 1922 to mark the thirtieth year since its première. The critics, in speaking of the enthusiasm aroused by Toscanini's direction, declared (as though to account for the extraordinary impression the performance had made on them) that the composer must have made revisions in the score for this occasion. A portion of the review in the *Corriere della Sera* of December 26, 1922 reads: "Puccini and Toscanini were called to the footlights. A gesture of comradeship between these two men turned the applause into a storm. The composer of *Manon* had kindled that emotional current between work and audience which alone can stamp a performance as a success. . . . *Manon* showed certain flaws in orchestration, a certain exuberance in melodic flow which occasionally led to an exaggerated sonorousness, a baroque quality in orchestral effects, not particularly appropriate to the nature of the composer's intention. Puccini, richer in experience, has for once not scorned subjecting his orchestration to a toilet! In the second act, and above all in the fourth, these retouches are particularly numerous; certain others become evi-

dent in the very first act. . . . With new grace and balance won through revision, Toscanini did the rest yesterday, flooding the whole score with vivid light, polished grace, spirited movement. . . .”

The very next day the same newspaper published Puccini’s answer to this comment:

“To the Editor:

“Your music critic says that I retouched the instrumental score of *Manon*: ‘In the second act, and above all in the fourth, these retouches are particularly numerous; certain others become evident in the very first act.’

“There were certain slight modifications in colouring, but I have never revised the score as published by Ricordi. My *Manon* is what it was thirty years ago, but last night it was conducted by Arturo Toscanini—that is to say, it was conducted in such a way as to give the composer the great and rare pleasure of hearing his music glow with those colours that he visualized when he composed it and had never seen again. We have too long been accustomed to perfectly vile performances of the so-called ‘repertory’ operas, those operas that resist encroaching time and distorting performance. An orchestra rehearsal, no attention to mise-en-scène, and away we go with all our ballast of mutilations and abuses, with which directors and singers have little by little encrusted the work.

"When Arturo Toscanini, with that fidelity and that feeling which are the essence of his incomparable art, grasps the chisel and hews away these deformities and restores the work to its original form, revealing to the public the composer's real intentions, the old work seems new, and the public says it is another. No, it is the same work, but that work interpreted by the greatest of interpreters in the musical world.

"Such miracles are the order of the day now at the Scala; and last night when the enthusiasm of the audience (I am grateful to them for that enthusiasm!) swept me away, too, and I was moved to embrace Toscanini, that embrace was not only a gesture of egotistical gratitude for his performance of my *Manon*; no, it was the gratitude of one artist to another who has transformed the Scala into a temple consecrated to art.

"Toscanini has worked a miracle at the Scala. I am used to visiting opera-houses throughout the world and witnessing and studying what is being done abroad. But it seems to me that what is going on now in the Scala is going on in no other opera-house in the world. Toscanini has performed not only the function of a musician, but also the function of an organizer. He has created an institution that is the boast of Italian art.

"Last year the productions were entrusted to guest *régisseurs*; we thought we could not get along without the work of foreigners. I wanted my operas

staged by my collaborator Gioacchino Forzano. Toscanini saw him at his work, and, judge of men that he is, he put Forzano in charge of the staging this year; and Forzano has shown how we can design mises-en-scène which, for movement of masses and delicacy of detail, can surpass in flexibility and elegance many that are seen abroad.

"The Scala needed Caramba, and now Caramba has found a field for revealing the splendid sweep of his imagination. Orchestra, singers, stage crew, are working together enthusiastically, and this nucleus of resources, controlled and inspired by Toscanini, is achieving such results that last night my *Manon* seemed a new *Manon*, an opera that appeared even to me thirty years younger. And on leaving the Scala I forgot that I was leaving from the stage and not, as thirty years before, from the gallery, and I all but started for the Osteria della Aida to eat one of those modest meals which used to mount up so inexorably on Signora Assunta's ledger.

"Thirty years younger! Sweetest of illusions!
Giacomo Puccini"

FURTHER OPERATIC ACTIVITY

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Further Operatic Activity

RICHARD WAGNER, IN HIS *ÜBER DAS DIRIGIEREN*, comments on certain orchestra-conductors who do not hold the E flat of the first theme in the Fifth Symphony long enough, and imagines Beethoven risen from the grave to cry out: "Hold that note; face it almost with terror! The sign was not put there in jest or confusion. I must have the fullest of sustained notes in my *adagio* to express emotion. When I use

the '*fermata*' in a passionate *allegro*, it is to sound the note of rapture. Drain the very life-blood of the tone. I arrest the waves, and the depths are visible; or I stem the clouds and tear the mists so that the eye can plunge into the sapphire until it grows drunk with light, until it grows blind with the glory of the sun itself. That is why I put '*fermate*' in my *allegro*. And now respect the clear thematic intention of my sustained E flat after the three stormy notes!"

Toscanini would like to say all this when he cannot get enough response from the orchestra. Instead he can usually only utter clipped, broken phrases; astute and profound observations, but brief and precise. "Come. Wait a moment. That E flat at a sustained *forte*." And more sharply: "With sustained power, I say!" His words are brusque, *staccato*; he says only so much as he must say to convey his idea to his musicians. He finds it a great effort to speak when he is conducting. "No, not like that!" he cries suddenly, while his right hand drops heavily on the reading-stand, and the musicians stop in alarm. "*Forte*, not noisy; there's a difference. You can have all the noise in the world, but no power"; or: "I want you to get

it into your heads that *fortissimo* is one thing and *sforzato* another: it is one degree more accented."

He tries to kindle in the orchestra the profound emotions that move him, those emotions and those images that can convey the spirit and the poetry of their music. "Look, this is a beautiful bit!" or: "Feel this eagerness, this yearning, this fire." He considers that Beethoven is an epic rather than a lyric poet, that he sings of grief rather than of his griefs. As Taine said: "*Ce cœur qui l'a fait ne dit pas qu'il est malheureux mais que le bonheur est impossible.*"

And he interrupts the rehearsal to reveal all the latent beauties of a passage. "This is a phrase slow in unfolding, of infinite sadness; it ebbs and flows like one long sigh. No breaks, no halts. From the beginning." And he taps with his baton. In another moment he is narrating: "This is a man broken by misfortune, fleeing for refuge in a wilderness. He sees the jewelled stars prick the sky on his last night. He loses himself, he forgets himself, he stops dreaming of repairing the irreparable. The serenity of the night distils a subtle sweetness, and his arms, no longer capable of lifting his broken body, strain

towards the beauty infusing the whole universe. This is a lovely thing, calm, delicate, soft." He is steeped in the mood, his eyes half shut; yet he is vigilant, active; scrutinizing every instrument, supervising every detail, seeing every reaction, controlling the wave of music. "Softer, sweeter, more mysterious—mystery—see, shadows drift by. We must make them unearthly. The first violins are still too agitated; calm, swelling! And the 'cellos more delicate, velvety—velvety—velvety!" Even his voice is strangely magical; it is harsh, almost toneless, but has a certain depth, warmth; he is always impassioned. He uses the homely word, the unadorned word, without the embroidery of a windy rhetoric. He expresses his ideas with the eloquence of an utter simplicity. Now and then a subtle, mysterious smile flickers on his face. Then again his face will cloud at some minute flaw in the music, the slightest unevenness, and he frowns blackly, bringing his hand to his mouth.

A look of pleasure alternates with a look of pained endurance. "Don't exaggerate, you double-basses: this is a *crescendo*, yes, but if you accent too

suddenly and too strongly, you won't be able to go any higher. Softly, take your time, take your time." An abrupt "Sh, sh" is flung here and there where a tone is too loud or too hurried to suit his judgment.

Once, when Giuseppe Verdi was directing his *Aida* at the Paris Opéra, he cried peremptorily to the violins as they attacked the overture: "Softer!" Whereupon the first violin laid his instrument aside, saying: "If we played any softer, we shouldn't be playing at all." Toscanini would have retorted with the axiom he repeats so often: "In *pianissimo* passages every musician should reach the point where he can no longer hear his instrument; in the *fortissimo* passages he should hear his instrument above all the rest."

"Let the air circulate between your notes," he says. "See a pause over each note." "I've told you over and over that I ask you only to read; but still you don't read the notes; the notes—and that includes what is written above and below the notes!" When he is too impatient to explain or cannot find the expression to convey his idea, he may exclaim, levelling an

accusing forefinger: "These things cannot be written into the score, but everyone must take them for granted."

One day he was rehearsing the *Parsifal* overture. The Grail motif is carried almost entirely by notes that are neither *staccato* nor *marcato*; they are to be played with a marked accent, but without jerkiness, and smoothly sustained after being vigorously attacked. "Bring out those notes," he instructs. "Let each one be like the affirmation of a creed." And later on, when they come to the cry of the wounded Amfortas: "See here, the first three notes must be intense. The end of the phrase after the *appoggiatura*, on the other hand, is languid, imploring." And again: "This is an entreaty, a prayer tinged at once with dread and trust, as if to say: 'Is there hope for us?'"

"This is like a dance of sylphs," he once said to his orchestra, of a Brahms "Variation." Apropos of another work: "This composition doesn't plunge into its *tempo* immediately; first there is a suave, delicate movement, the *tempo* is not yet apparent. I am looking for it, I am looking for it. . . ."

Serious confession! For the mystery of an in-

terpretation lies in the determination of the *tempo*. "The whole duty of the conductor is to find the *tempo*," said Wagner. The old masters had so nice an intuition on this point that in Bach we rarely find any indication of it. And that is logical enough. Bach may have said: "If anyone does not understand my themes, my images, and does not perceive their character and their colour—do you really think a simple Italian word will teach him the *tempo*?"

Toscanini rebuilds the structure, which he has previously analysed to each minutest detail, each most recondite thought. He probes the very heart of the music, identifies himself with it. The work of art is his world, and one might well repeat for him Victor Hugo's words:

*Si vous avez en vous vivantes et pressées
Un monde intérieur d'images, de pensées,
De sentiments d'amour, d'ardente passion,
Pour féconder ce monde échangez-le sans cesse
Avec l'autre universe visible qui vous presse,
Mêlez toute votre âme à la création.*

Among the premières that came to the Scala after *Otello* and *Falstaff*, Boito's *Nerone* was without doubt

the greatest success.¹ Reviewing it for the *Corriere della Sera*, Gaetano Cesari said:

“The conductor appreciated the situation created by the fact that Boito died without ever seeing his *Nerone* performed, having long ago designated Toscanini as the musician and friend to whom he would want his score entrusted. . . . For many of us the crowded and dazzling scene vanished and gave place to the pathetic picture of an artist, silent and alone, bent over this music he was never to hear. He had worked for forty years on this opera. To think that the faith, the patience, the inspired labour of that old man, now gone, could stir the emotions of all these living thousands!

“The audience felt all this and turned with a surge of affection to Toscanini. Last night Arturo Toscanini was not only the conductor who so generously dedicated his gift of labour, genius, fidelity, to the *Nerone*; he stood, in a way, for the presence in spirit of Arrigo Boito.

“The occasion was unforgettable. It marks an epoch in the history of the Scala. . . . In the audience were Puccini, Giordano, Zanella, Montemezzi, Bianchi, Lualdi. The old adjectives are powerless to describe the scene. There was a profound restless-

¹ May 1, 1924. In the cast were Mmes Rosa Raisa and Luisa Bertana; and Messrs. Aureliano Pertile, Carlo Galeffi, and Marcel Journet.

ness, eagerness, the excited buzz of voices. But it all stopped magically when Toscanini took his place. . . . Then came a perfect storm of acclaim for the man who was to realize the long-cherished dream of the dead composer. . . .

“In accepting the obligation to produce *Nerone*, Toscanini assumed not only a delicate task, but a difficult one as well—difficult because there were so many problems, of which he alone must be arbiter—problems in music, execution, setting. Boito had conceived his opera when great singers were not yet a rarity; he may even have written certain roles expressly for certain singers who are now dead. Boito, too, had left lavish notes on the *mise-en-scène* and had had the great Pogliaghi make sketches for settings, costumes. . . . But to supply substitutes for singers who are dead; to transpose to the Scala stage on a huge three-dimensional scale those grandiose pictures which Boito had imagined—here were problems that could not but weigh heavily on an artist with Toscanini’s sense of responsibility! . . .

“The results of his work were magnificent. The spirit of the composition as Boito had intended it glowed in every page, in the interpretation of every theme, in the progress of every scene. . . . In the serenades on the Appian Way and the dark terror of Nero, in the melodious ‘Pater’ of Rubria and the terrible invocation of Asteria, in the surging music of the Emperor’s triumph, there were the aptness of

movement, moderation and effectiveness of shading, technical finish, that we find in every Toscanini performance. In the temple of Simon Magus the unearthly atmosphere was suggested and Gobrias' comic role did not distort the harmony of effect. . . . Nothing more delicately conceived than the prayer at the Nativity could have been expressed by any chorus—nothing artificial, nothing forced. Later that same orchestra and choir, under Toscanini's baton, took on the agitated rhythm of a mob, partly seen, partly imagined, both in the sonorous music of the masses on the stage and in the distant crash and clangour from the Circus Maximus."

The *Nerone* première echoed round the world. The English press devoted whole columns to the event. The *Daily Telegraph*, for example, considered *Nerone* the most spectacular opera ever produced, and maintained that Toscanini deserved, to a large extent, the enthusiasm which the performance had aroused—he had brought the organization of the Scala to a grade of perfection that was perhaps without its equal in all Europe.

Gunnar Hauch, music critic of the Copenhagen *Nationaltidende*, summed up his impressions of the

Nerone première as follows: "It was a great pleasure to witness this opera of deep and rich inspiration. The lyric passages are, in my opinion, the best; and the entire opera seems to me finer, more profound, than *Mefistofele*. The production was superb. During the past few months I have been visiting the most important opera-houses in Europe, but I find the Scala incomparable. All its performances are perfect. Toscanini reveals the subtlest values of whatever music he interprets. I have heard Wagner operas in Germany; but they are not the equal of the same operas under Toscanini's direction. No other opera-house in Europe gives performances like the Scala performances."

If we pass from music critics to musicians, opinions are still the same. A member of the Ricordi Company in New York, in comparing the performance with any American one, declared that although operas in America are sumptuous in costume and scenery, they lack the subtle effects in all aspects of music, settings, singing, interpretation, that are to be encountered only in the Scala performances under

Toscanini's direction. Still another American added that the Metropolitan is ruled by commercial considerations, the Scala by artistic.

After Boito's *Nerone* came Puccini's *Turandot* on April 25, 1926, an occasion comparable to the première of the Boito opera in the enthusiasm it received, in the intrinsic loveliness of the music, and in the emotion it aroused by the still fresh memory of the composer's death. Puccini had been one of Toscanini's closest friends; the evening was a memorial tribute to him.

In the words of Cesari, there is a new Puccini in *Turandot*, a new majesty of conception, a new massiveness of structure. Here and there lurks the old Puccini flavour, but over the whole broods an inspiration vaster, more profound. As for the performance itself, "Toscanini is always Toscanini; no greater praise can be given. The chorus, too, was superb, as were the principals [Mmes Raisa, Zaniboni; Messrs. Rimini, Fleta, Walter]."

It was the most delicate of tasks: Toscanini knew Puccini's intentions, but he now must project them, give them body. Several weeks before his death Puc-

cini had played the music for Toscanini and said: "If I should never finish this music and it should be performed, at this point someone will step to the footlights and say: 'The composer wrote so far; then he died.' " Arturo Toscanini remembered these pathetic words, although Franco Alfano (on Toscanini's recommendation) had completed the opera. And with the approval of Puccini's family and of the publisher Ricordi, Toscanini decided that at the first performance the opera should be given just as Puccini had left it. The last page Puccini ever composed was the sorrowful music of little Liu's death. Puccini's farewell to poor little Liu was his farewell to life.

The audience was strangely moved. The retinue that bore Liu off melted into the pale light of morning. A last sigh in the music, a poignant lament. "A clear B flat from a piccolo echoed the story of fleeting life and the far-off, impenetrable mystery in which are quenched all consuming passions and secret loves like Liu's." The cortège has vanished. Calaf and the Princess are grief-stricken. The orchestra is hushed. And Toscanini turned to the audience, hesitating a moment, too moved to speak, as though he heard

again: "Here Toscanini will say . . ." Then in a choked voice he spoke these words: "Here the music ends; here the *maestro* died."

Ildebrando Pizzetti's *Debora e Jaele*, which had its world première at the Scala on December 16, 1922, deserves special mention both because of the importance of the composer (already known for his collaborations with Gabriele d'Annunzio) and for the position of the opera in the field of technical musical development. Under Toscanini's direction the complexities of Pizzetti's score do not impede its clarity. Toscanini brought out every unit in its just proportion and interpreted the music with a rare sense of balance. One of the defects in the score of *Debora* (if one can speak of defects at all) is in the extreme difficulty it presents for execution, interpretation, presentation. But Toscanini smoothed out the difficulties, disentangled the intricacies.

During the opera season 1924-5 there were two premières at the Scala, both directed by Toscanini.

The first, on December 20, 1924, was *La Cena delle Beffe*, based by Umberto Giordano on the well-known play by Sem Benelli. In the opinion of Cesari,

passages that seem mediocre enough in the written score gained enormously in Toscanini's performance. For example, the vigorous *tempo* with which he swept through the first act served to bind the fragmentary episodes, to weld them into unity. The success of the opera was an index of the popular esteem in which Giordano was held and of popular familiarity with Benelli's play, and the applause that greeted it, especially after the first, second, and fourth acts, was a tribute to the melodiousness of the score and the dramatic quality of the libretto.²

The other première, on March 7, 1925, was Riccardo Zandonai's *I Cavalieri d'Ekebù*. Arturo Rosato's libretto was an adaptation of Selma Lagerlöf's *Legend of Gosta Berling*. This performance was a critical test of Zandonai's musical worth, partly because of the significance automatically attached to any première conducted by Toscanini and sponsored by the Scala. And the Scala alone could have given the opera such dignity, clarity, effectiveness. Toscanini left nothing undone in achieving the effects that

² The principal roles were sung by Mme Carmen Melis and Messrs. Lazaro and Franci.

Zandonai had intended, in overcoming the snags in the score (by no means few or slight), in causing every detail to emerge in its proper relief, in enhancing theme and melody, obtaining volume without ever lapsing into melodrama.

Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien, by Gabriele d'Annunzio and Claude Debussy, with Ida Rubinstein as Saint Sebastian, was performed at the Scala on March 4, 1926, fifteen years after its Paris première.

Cesari reported in the *Corriere della Sera*:

"Last night there appeared a singular work, extraordinarily complex, typically d'Annunzian, embodying the very core of his art: the exaltation of heroism and beauty, a burning sensuality in the very abnegation of sensuality, passion that strains, not for action, but for the polished gesture, static perfection, the subtlety of lyric moods in continuous musical flow. And all the harmony and melody and colour and perfume which d'Annunzio can draw from words, he can carry even into a strange medium with consummate mastery.

"Gabriele d'Annunzio here revives the form of the mediæval mystery play. On the eve of the first performance of this opera in Paris, in 1911, Claude

Debussy wanted to explain his attitude as musician towards this work. 'Sometimes I wrote simply musical decoration,' he said. 'I illustrated noble themes with rhythmic passages; and when, in the last act, the saint mounts to paradise, I think I set down what I felt at the thought of soaring to the heavens. I may add that I wrote in two months a score that would ordinarily have taken me a year. I carried out my theories on operatic music—that such music should not be merely a haphazard accompaniment to the action, but should fuse, body and spirit, with the text.'

"And in fact the passages for voices and instruments are at times decorative; at times, however, they penetrate more deeply into the poetic implications of the action and subtly express their mood in sound. But in either case the contribution of these fragments could not assume any vast significance in the mystery as a whole. Debussy himself must have perceived this when he saw he had condensed into two months the work of at least a year; and the audience perceived it in recognizing that the music did not all bear the imprint of delicate fantasy that exists in other Debussy compositions.

"But at those points in the opera where there is no sharp line of demarcation between the tangible human, and the divine as spirit of poetry and transcendent vision, Debussy's art varies and enriches the action. In this he showed perfect restraint, when-

ever song could pour a flood of haunting notes about the mute central figure; or instrumental music could bathe the wounded martyr in the odour of sanctity, each note becoming the golden ray of an aureole or deepening into cloudy chords of colour. . . .

"And of course Toscanini's performance, through orchestra and singers . . . was the quintessential Debussy, fastidious, measured, melodious. The poetic overtones of Debussy's music emerged clear and delicate."

D'Annunzio, who was present at this performance, begged the audience to turn their acclaim from him to Toscanini, saying that it was rather he who deserved it. And Ida Rubinstein: "*Ah, Toscanini. C'est unique. La Scala c'est Toscanini: voilà tout.*"

On May 16, 1928 came the première of Ildebrando Pizzetti's *Fra Gherardo*, on which, in Cesari's words, all the resources of the Scala were concentrated, lending the opera light, vitality, movement, to relieve the predominantly gloomy atmosphere of the story and the mournful tenor of the music. The merits of the production under Toscanini's baton banished any prejudice that might have been aroused in the audience by the unbroken greyness of mood and a cer-

tain prolixity of style. In *Fra Gherardo* the composer makes use of the simplest monosyllabic diction on the stage, of a polyphony built up of small units in the orchestra. Pizzetti's increased and bolder use of dissonances is noteworthy in comparison with his *Debora e Jaele*. He tends to express emotion indirectly; he rarely gives way to the violence of swift images, unfettered dynamics, flashes of dialogue, burst of music. Conditioned by his temperament and his æsthetic creed, his medium is the restrained, the polished, the composed. It is only in the light of the technical difficulties involved in the score that Toscanini's contribution of clarity, balance, colour, gains its proper evaluation.

Moussorgsky's *Boris Godounov*, presented at the Scala on February 16, 1922, attracted the excited attention usually reserved for a première. Toscanini gave it the imprint of his genius as interpreter. He steeped himself in the mood of this posthumous work of the great Russian composer, so that every resource, musical, scenic, might be moulded to the Moussorgsky spirit. He gave such precise, modulated, and varied expression to the *Boris* as to etch the characters against

the background, to bring this background into prominence whenever mass action demanded. The conductor flooded with colour the menacingly shadowy background of the opera. The sombre measures of the Russian liturgy, the simple rhythms of Slavic folk-music, served now as frame for the action, now as part of the action.

Toscanini's direction of the orchestra enhanced these values, for, instead of covering up the singing, the instrumental music increased its effectiveness. Toscanini's version was as much the negation of every bloodlessly academic tenet as was the opera itself. He made the most of every hieratic expression, every vivid popular rhythm, every unexpected variation in the feeling. He could express the most complex and quicksilver mood of an individual torn by contrasting emotions, as is Boris.³

The same season closed with another exceptional performance, that of Wagner's *Meistersinger*, on May 8. "At last night's performance," wrote Cesari, "it was of course Toscanini who brought the Wagner comedy to life, maintaining from beginning to end an

³ Zaleski gave an admirable performance in this role, previously sung at the Scala by Chaliapin in 1913.

unbroken level of perfection and achieving results characterized by precision, taste, and expressiveness. The opera had none of the ponderous majesty of a Mottl interpretation, for example, and none of the nervousness of a Mahler performance. It was serene and fluent, limpid, interpreted by an artist, not drummed out by a bandmaster." And the demonstration by audience and performers proved that they appreciated Toscanini's part in all this. At the end of the second act the curtains parted suddenly to reveal to the patent astonishment of the *maestro* an unforgettable picture of performers, stage-managers, stagehands, all applauding him.

On May 15, 1925 came the performance of *Pel­léas et Mélisande*. The opera had previously been presented at the Scala, in 1908, in Italian. Now it was given in French, so that Maurice Maeterlinck's accents, words, thoughts, in this poetic drama might correspond perfectly with the harmonies and rhythms, equally poetic, of Debussy's music.

In view of the unusual form of this opera, Toscanini was anxious to make this performance a step forward towards his ideal of a perfect interpretation.

He was justified by his end. After so much Debussy propaganda in concert halls it might reasonably be expected that Debussy's opera would encounter no further antagonism, and it was therefore true that a large part of the success of *Pelléas et Mélisande* must be attributed to a performance giving full expression to all the integral values of the opera. The Toscanini performance emphasized the typical Debussy characteristics, making the work easier to understand and therefore to enjoy.

In order to harmonize with Maeterlinck's symbolism the music had to make certain sacrifices: of melodic line, of thematic unity, of energetic development in the *declamato*. Colour replaces melody, the brief instrumental episode supersedes sweeping symphonic movement, conversational tone supplants majestic *declamato*. The poetic-musical form of *Pelléas et Mélisande* was the product of such negative measures.

Toscanini succeeded in achieving the subtlest effects. The instrumental music was exquisite, self-sufficient apart from its context. On the stage, there were no forced notes, no over-emphasis to distort the

spirit of the Debussy *declamato*. The secret lay in instrumental fusion and vocal diction; this Toscanini achieved with his unique gift for analysing to the most elementary detail. He knows that in Debussy everything is toned down, that Debussy's unity is a unity won by breaking up the forms to the smallest units, dwelling on synthesis, pursuing colour of harmonies and timbres—an art touched with the pale glow of moonlight.

The revival of *Otello* was particularly noteworthy in the program for the season of 1926-7. After this performance a distinguished critic declared that without seeing a Toscanini rehearsal of the opera it would be impossible to realize how much sacrifice, patience, and insight went into that incomparable third act, in which Toscanini revealed as it had never been revealed before what Verdi intended to be the most dramatic passage in the entire opera. So difficult is this scene that it has invariably been mutilated in production, yet at the Scala it embodied that ideal of classic tragedy, the awakening of pity and fear by the action of the drama. "Thanks to Toscanini, the problems which the classic tragedians could solve only

in part, owing to the meagreness and crudeness of their resources and the still rudimentary form of the chorus, had their complete and perfect solution. Shakspeare's tragedy had found in Verdi its equivalent in music; now it found in Toscanini its equivalent in interpretation."

Rigoletto was performed superbly on March 26 of the same year. Toscanini's exquisite artistic sense restored to the hackneyed opera sufficient balance and integrity to justify its performance at the greatest of Italian opera-houses. Messrs. Galeffi and D'Alessio and Mme Toti dal Monte all gave admirable performances.

The fiftieth anniversary of the first performance of *Gioconda* fell just then, on March 24, 1927, suggesting to Toscanini the gracious gesture of presenting Amilcare Ponchielli's masterpiece at the Scala. There were murmurs from certain quarters at this attempt to revive a half-forgotten musician, but Toscanini, with an enthusiasm and scrupulousness peculiarly his own, could not be swayed from his plan of recalling the name of the great and unfortunate composer of *Gioconda*.

FURTHER OPERATIC ACTIVITY

Another significant revival came on May 18, 1927, with Paul Dukas's *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue*. The Scala première of the opera had taken place in 1911. The difficulty in producing the work is in preventing the polyphony from obscuring the idea. *Ariane* is strikingly reminiscent of the prevailing style of the period in which it was written, the style of Richard Strauss in all its characteristic exuberance.

The most important event in the 1927 season, however, was the performance of *Fidelio* on April 7. This work had not been given in Italy except for a trivial performance at the Teatro Dal Verme by a German company on a flying visit to Milan; and another production at the Regio in Turin for the Beethoven centenary. The 1927 performance under Toscanini was a première for the Scala. The score used was that of the 1814 edition, which Beethoven had pronounced definitive.

Preparations for the *Fidelio* cost Toscanini unusual effort. The opera undoubtedly shows discrepancy between form and spirit. Not only was it necessary to acquaint the Scala audience with *Fidelio*, but the undying loveliness of its best pages must shine

without blur or flaw or lack in form or spirit. Toscanini was well aware of the confession that Beethoven had made to Griesinger: "My *Fidelio* was not understood; but I know the public will end by appreciating it."

To grasp the essential significance of this opera Toscanini had to review the evolution of Beethoven's work with the music-drama. From 1806 to 1814 the composer experimented with the operatic form: he planned a *Romulus*, a *Return of Ulysses* (in collaboration with the poet Korner). Shakspeare tempted him for a moment and he dreamed of a *Macbeth*. Then he composed the *Coriolanus* overture, inspired by the Shaksperian *Coriolanus*. In 1810 he wrote the music for Goethe's *Egmont*; in 1811, the *Ruins of Athens* and *King Stephen*, based on Kotzebue material. Once Toscanini knew the relation of *Fidelio* to Beethoven's theories, once he had within his grasp the intentions that had guided Beethoven in its composition, he could throw about it the warm and vibrant atmosphere of life.⁴

⁴ In the cast were Mme Elizabeth Ohms as Leonora, and Messrs. Merli and Franci as Florestan and Pizarro respectively.

Every season at the Scala after 1921 opened under Toscanini's baton. It might even be said that the Milanese opera-house had no existence apart from him. His principles, his spirit, were so strongly felt that even when one of his assistant conductors stepped on to the rostrum, Toscanini's influence could always be felt through him. In December 1926, when Mascagni was invited to conduct his *Iris* at the Scala, I heard him say: "I can't help being a little timid at holding the baton so recently in the hands of the greatest of orchestra-conductors."

Toscanini's activity reached its peak in the season of 1925, when he directed twenty-five performances in forty-two days! Not only did he have his duties at the Scala, but he also assumed other engagements outside that opera-house. In March 1925 the bill-boards of the Teatro Regio in Turin announced a coming performance of Boito's *Nerone* under Toscanini's direction. *I Cavalieri d'Ekebù* was given on Wednesday night at the Scala; he left on Thursday morning at six o'clock for Turin, where he directed an entire rehearsal of *Nerone* (and one rehearsal is as much work as three performances). An hour after the re-

hearsal he left for Milan, to conduct that night a dress rehearsal of *Manon*. The next day brought a second trip to Turin and two full rehearsals of *Nerone*. Then he was off to Milan to conduct *Manon* that very evening at the Scala. And that is not all: on Sunday came a rehearsal of *Nerone* at Turin during the day, and a third performance of *I Cavalieri d'Ekebù* at Milan in the evening. And so it went. This feverish activity lasted almost a month, leaving his associates dismayed and worried, accustomed though they were to a tirelessness which had already become something of a legend.

Toscanini is never one to pamper himself, to yield to physical discomfort, even to admit tiredness. For example, the Scala opera season of 1921-2 was scarcely over when the concert season opened. Toscanini was not to direct any concerts: he and Panizza, who had worked so hard for seven months, were to rest at last. The concerts began; Molinari, Coates, Wendel, De Sabata, succeeded each other on the Scala rostrum. And Toscanini was only a spectator.

"We used to see him at the rear of the orchestra or at the end of an aisle," says G. M. Ciampelli. "He

was always absorbed and inscrutable, always silent, leaning against a column or a door-jamb, his opera-glasses in his hand, his eyes fixed on the conductor; no sign of approval or disapproval. Obviously this phlegmatic air was a pose! He, forced to play the role of spectator; he, merely to *listen* to music in his Scala? Incredible! We in the audience used to wonder how long he would bear it, as we passed him and he greeted us with the vague smile of the short-sighted man.

“And he did not bear it long. One fine day it was rumoured that Toscanini would conduct the Ninth Symphony—a mere trifle, no effort at all! And so began the most amusing game I ever witnessed. For after the first performance came a second, naturally enough; then came a third. Then Carlo Gatti invited him to conduct in the Teatro del Popolo. Toscanini agreed. Again the first concert was followed by a second, the second by a third. Who knows what it would have come to if the calendar (it was July 15) had not warned him that it was time to stop?”

Toscanini wants to be left in peace. He does not want to be told that human capacities have their

limits, that the strongest constitution will bear only so much. It is better to leave him alone. He may go from a difficult rehearsal of *Debora e Jaele* at five o'clock in the afternoon and rush to the piano to prepare an act of *Manon Lescaut*. Then in the evening he will conduct *Falstaff*. Often during the intermissions he will stand on the left side of the stage, near the door leading to the dressing-rooms, motionless and mute, in his habitual pose—his left elbow in the palm of his right hand, the fingers of his left hand gripping his chin. He can stand just so for twenty minutes, without moving, without a word. Everyone knows that the *maestro* is not to be disturbed; singers, musicians, stage-hands, all slip by him or sidle round him without addressing a word. No one, short of an imbecile, would accost him except in an emergency.

Then a swift glance about. "Are we ready?" "The *maestro* is ready!" cries the stage-manager. "The *maestro* is ready!" repeat the call-boys like sentinels at their posts. The second act opens. Toscanini is again swept into the intense round of his activity.

"When he is around, even the walls move!" exclaimed an old watchman at the Scala,

CHAPTER TWELVE

More Symphony Concerts

DURING THE MONTH OF JUNE 1924, AFTER NEGOTIATIONS with the impresario Ernest Stamm, Toscanini agreed to conduct a series of concerts in Switzerland. His farewell performance in Italy came on June 13, in the Teatro Sociale of Varese. It was not only the citizens of Varese that made up the enormous audience; hundreds of automobiles poured in with people from the district round about. Even a wagon-load of peasants from the country-side came to applaud the

maestro. There was the usual thunderous ovation for Toscanini, and as the theatre was emptying, the demonstrations were renewed outside. But Toscanini, foreseeing all this, had arranged to leave by automobile directly after the concert, avoiding honours, celebrations, and tributes.

On the morning of the fifteenth, then, he left for Switzerland with his orchestra in a train marked: "Toscanini Tour." Twelve concerts were to be given in this order: three at Zurich, one each at Sangallo, Lucerne, and Berne; two at Lausanne; two at Geneva; one at Basel; then a last concert at Zurich. Their success grew in a mounting crescendo. The criticism in the *Basler Nachrichten* is indicative of the enthusiasm aroused by the tour. "We had to wait for Toscanini to scatter the mists about Beethoven's last compositions, to unravel the symphonic labyrinth of Brahms, to clarify the symbolism in which Wagner's passion and thought are sheathed. All this was revealed to us by the Toscanini orchestra. Never before have the Beethoven Fifth Symphony and the *Leonora* overture, Wagner's *Tristan* overture and the Good Friday music, produced such an impression on us."

MORE SYMPHONY CONCERTS

Toscanini returned to Zurich on the thirtieth for the closing performance in the Tonhalle. Public and critics alike spoke of Toscanini and his orchestra as a revelation. "Nikisch, Lamoureux, served the great masters eagerly, faithfully," wrote the newspaper *Suisse*. "Only Toscanini and Richter re-create not only their individual style, but also their spirit, re-create them vibrant with life. And these rarest of interpreters we must honour as we do the greatest of creators."

The Swiss public appreciated Toscanini's rich gift as interpreter and re-creator and paid him ardent tribute, calling on him enthusiastically at the end of every concert. At Lausanne the orchestra played in the cathedral. Presumably there would be no applause in such an austere atmosphere. ("So much the better!" muttered Toscanini.) The audience was conventionally silent after the first number, the overture to the *Barbiere di Siviglia*; but when the *Leonora* overture came, they threw propriety to the winds. A roar of applause went up. The selections from modern Italian composers like De Sabata's *Juventus* and the Respighi compositions, *Antiche Arie e Dame*, *Le*

Fontane di Roma, aroused the liveliest admiration and were applauded excitedly.

Toscanini returned to Milan on July 1. All the members of the orchestra had been profoundly impressed and spoke with great enthusiasm of the Swiss tour. Toscanini, too, had expressed his great pleasure to Ernest Stamm of Zurich, who had sponsored the tour and organized it so efficiently.

It must be admitted, with all due respect to Switzerland, that Toscanini had scarcely been well known there. It is even said that a certain lady, on hearing of Toscanini's imminent arrival, exclaimed: "Really? What will he sing?" But, that anecdote aside, the fact is that in Switzerland there existed here and there (in Geneva, for example) a certain respectful hostility; even more than that, a skeptical reserve. The Swiss were accustomed to the great German orchestras, to Nikisch, to Furtwängler, to Lamoureux. They could not surrender first place *a priori* to a new-comer. But they did have to surrender before the reality; at first a conditional surrender, with reservations; then an unconditional surrender, freely confessed. From the first concerts, critics and journalists began to follow

the orchestra; this informal entourage grew until at Zurich there were some twenty members.

As far as critical reviews are concerned, the Scala orchestra was exalted without exception. Aloys Mooser, the severe critic of the review *Dissonances*, devoted an article to Toscanini—and he had not devoted an article to a conductor for twenty-five years! The impression that Toscanini and his musicians made on critics and public in general was highly favourable. The Italians living in Switzerland naturally led in these ovations; even the humblest of them felt a certain pride in identifying himself with his countryman Toscanini.

There was in Zurich a modest restaurant kept by a Bolognese. One day Toscanini came. Frenzied excitement, gaping amazement on the part of the proprietor! The *maestro* must have been satisfied with the Bolognese menu, for he gave the proprietor a photograph of himself autographed with the first notes of the Scherzo in the Beethoven Fifth Symphony. The restaurant-keeper's wife was simply beatific. "I am going to frame this!" she declared. "It will be my daughter's dowry!"

When the 1925 season at the Scala closed, Toscanini, after a few brief days of rest, returned to Switzerland on June 25 for a second tour. He opened this series in the Lausanne cathedral, which was crammed to the doors.

The tour would certainly have continued with as great success as the first; but unfortunately, after the fourth concert, some difficulty arose concerning the agreement with Stamm, and Toscanini refused to continue in a situation that he felt infringed on his rights and the rights of his musicians. He returned immediately to Milan, conducting at the Scala the programs that were to have been given in Zurich. The Italian public saw in this an occasion for rendering homage not only to Toscanini's artistic worth, but to the dignity with which he and his musicians had closed the unfortunate incident. The ovation, first at the entrance of the orchestra, then at Toscanini's appearance, was unprecedented.

First on the program came the *Eroica*. Then Sinigaglia's fresh and spirited overture to the *Baruffe Chiozzotte*, so admirably suited to the Goldoni comedy that inspired it, was followed by the Nocturne from

Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream*. After that came Stravinsky's *Petrouchka*, its two comic scenes no less effective for the lack of ballet action to which the music is an accompaniment. The concert came to a magnificent close with the *Tannhäuser* overture.

The second program, on June 30 (the day on which the Swiss tour was to have closed), brought Haydn's Fourth Symphony, Elgar's *Variations on an Original Theme*, Debussy's *Iberia*, Sibelius's *Swan of Tuonela*, Respighi's *Pini di Roma*.

But Toscanini never did know the meaning of rest. The Symphony Society, to which Milan owes an unbroken tradition in concert music, offered a practical solution to public demand. The orchestra returned to the Scala for a new series of concerts. Since the days of Franco Faccio the Scala had led in sponsoring the popularization of instrumental music, a movement in which Toscanini had taken part since 1896. Now, thanks to an orchestra that is progressively moving to greater perfection, under a leader who is infusing fresh vigour into the Symphony Society, the new Scala was in a position to resume its concert programs.

Toscanini entered into this movement as enthusiastically as he did into any movement to enhance the prestige of the Scala, contributing his priceless support by conducting the first cycle of concerts which opened the season under the auspices of the Symphony Society. He gave three concerts: one on October 12, 1925, at the Teatro del Popolo, with Gluck, Mozart, Bach, Weber, Wagner, Debussy, and Tommasini music. The next came on the fourteenth of that month, opening with Giuseppe Martucci's Symphony in F major, a composition that had not been heard for over twenty years—as a matter of fact, not since its first hearing at the Scala in 1905 under Toscanini's direction. Then came Victor De Sabata's *Gethsemani*, a new composition by a composer who had become well known through Toscanini's efforts; then Cherubini's *Anacreon* overture; the *Siegfried Idyll* of Wagner, and Liszt's *Les Préludes*. The third concert, on October 16, brought Vivaldi, Beethoven, Brahms (*Variations on a Theme by Haydn*), Pich-Mangialli, Wagner, Rossini.

These three concerts were an overture to the opera season of 1925-6 at the Scala. But in the mean

MORE SYMPHONY CONCERTS

time Toscanini was being urged to return to the United States at least for a few concerts. Enmeshed in that activity which had lent a nervous, vibrant, passionate rhythm to the Scala performances, Toscanini continued to put off his departure. He realized that his absence during these first years of the Scala experiment might work untold harm. But finally, persuading himself that his principles, theories, and aims had become the rule for his colleagues at the Scala, he permitted himself to hope that his temporary absence would not break the rhythm of the Scala season.

Accordingly, he accepted the insistent invitations from abroad, and sailed on the *Berengaria* from Cherbourg on December 30, 1925. His wife and daughter Wally accompanied him. He was to conduct the Philharmonic Orchestra; his programs were already selected, his movements scheduled. There must be no waste motion once he was in America, since he did not wish to stay away from the Scala for more than six weeks.

Rehearsals began immediately upon Toscanini's arrival in New York on January 5. On January 11 he was to conduct a concert at Carnegie Hall, the first of

a series of eleven (two of them "students' concerts" at popular prices). Then was to come a benefit performance for the Italian Welfare League at Mecca Temple; then one concert in Brooklyn and one out of town, in Philadelphia.

The rehearsals were held in Carnegie Hall. The homage rendered to Toscanini at these rehearsals was that of skilled musicians to a skilled musician. Applause from the performers echoed through the empty hall, even when Toscanini had to explain why the orchestra's interpretation was still far from the ideal interpretation. From the first reading, the rehearsals were all directed by Toscanini; the music that was to be included in the fifteen concerts had of course not been sent ahead. The *maestro* brought the scores in that precious trunk which constituted his music library. He introduced for the first time in the United States Respighi's *Pini di Roma*, De Sabata's *Gethsemani*, Tommasini's *Paessaggi toscani*. Toscanini had before him a group of musicians from all of Europe; a group selected through the strictest examinations, with the strictest standards. The hundred musicians spoke many tongues; a dozen of them knew Italian. But

MORE SYMPHONY CONCERTS

Toscanini chose to address this international orchestra in English.

The *maestro* produced a marked impression, not only as musician, but also as speaker; that is to say, as interpreter in words of the compositions he conducted. He preceded and interspersed the rehearsals with a wealth of illustrations, technical, psychological. The musicians were enormously impressed with the clarity, vigour, and delicacy of his interpretations, so swiftly and concisely sketched. They actually rose to their feet to applaud him. As an indication of the growing *rapprochement* between orchestra and conductor may be mentioned the fact that each musician asked for and received an autographed photograph of the conductor.

Requests for autographs streamed in by hundreds from the public as well; and invitations to receptions, dinners, balls, were unending. Toscanini tried to avoid all this pomp and ceremony, but he could not always defend himself with success. Farewell ovations were interminable, among them a reception at Steinway Hall for Toscanini and Respighi; another reception at the home of Otto Kahn. There

was, too, an Italian reception on board the *Conte Biancamano*, organized by a committee headed by the Italian ambassador, De Martino, with the New York consul-general, Signor Axerio, among the members.

"Every epoch has its apostles, every religion its missionaries." So wrote Adriano Lualdi a few days before Toscanini opened his famous concert tour in the autumn of 1920; for Toscanini "is more than a believer, he is a missionary of the faith; he is more than a power, he stimulates power." This the Italians in America felt about the ambassador of Italianism.

After the turbulent weeks in America, the passage home on the *Conte Rosso* was a peaceful interlude. Even the tribute of the passengers who rose when Toscanini entered the salon annoyed him as an infringement on his privacy, his rest. The fastest liner was not fast enough to satisfy the *maestro*. He was obsessed by an unbearable impatience to get to Italy, and bridged the distance between in anticipation by continually sending and receiving radio messages about events at the Scala. He received a cordial message from Senator Mangiagalli, president of the Scala

Association: "From this old Scala, which you love and are leading from triumph to triumph, I greet you on your way home, in the name of the Scala Association, of your colleagues, and of Milan itself. There is in this greeting the same pride and gratitude and affection with which our most deeply felt wishes accompanied you beyond the sea, worthy ambassador of Italy, master of every art."

Most of his time on the return journey Toscanini devoted to the scores he had brought with him. On the crossing to America he had busied himself with compositions that were to make up his concert programs there; on his return he gave his attention to works for the coming Scala season.

Toscanini and his wife and elder daughter landed at Naples on February 22, 1926. They were met at the pier by the other two children, Walter and Wanda, who had come down from Milan. But Toscanini could not even greet them in peace: reporters and critics came aboard, harrying him with questions, showering him with congratulations, with a thousand compliments. Toscanini took advantage of the general confusion to escape to his cabin.

Toscanini left the usual trail of enthusiasm behind him in America. Every critic and every reporter waxed poetic to sing his praises in pæans. This was a Roman triumph in modern dress. The Philadelphia and New York newspapers vied with each other in superlatives, in figures of speech, in demonstrations of dazzled wonder. Toscanini is the greatest conductor among great conductors, they said. He is an Orpheus, a Titan among musicians, a magician who weaves his spells with a baton. He is supreme in sensibility, passion, power. He is all fire and flame; not an interpreter, not a performer, but the soul of music incarnate.

On his return from America, Toscanini initiated a series of concerts at the Scala. This was in October 1926, when the entire musical world was beginning to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of Beethoven's death. Toscanini organized a cycle of Beethoven concerts which included performances of all the nine symphonies.

Milan had never witnessed such a musical enterprise before. The nine symphonies had never been played in one series of concerts devoted exclusively

to Beethoven. With this act Toscanini passed in review twenty-five years of Beethoven's creative life—that is to say, the period which embraced the composition of the nine symphonies. This was an inspiration on Toscanini's part, not only from the standpoint of Beethoven's technical musical development, but also from the standpoint of his philosophic and psychological development.

To appreciate with Toscanini the significance of the cycle, we must remember that for Beethoven the composition of a symphony was a gigantic task, a task so great that he assumed it only nine times in his life, and then at long intervals. Mozart and Haydn enjoyed composing symphonies. Mozart considered opera more important and excelled in that form; Haydn, to tell the truth, composed symphonies to a certain extent in order that the Estherhazy house might not lack new music. (Far from being an irreverence towards Haydn, this statement is to be interpreted as a revelation of the extraordinary fecundity and the inexhaustible freshness of his vein.) What has always been said of Mozart—that all his symphonies are a series of landmarks on the road to his *Don Giovanni*

—could in no sense be applied to the position of Beethoven's symphonies in his career.

The world was not wide enough for Beethoven; his music probes the infinite. Lenz wrote as a heading for the Ninth the motto on Herschel's telescope: "*Coeli munimenta perrupit.*" This yearning for the incredible, the unknowable, the insuperable, led to the tortured search that flickers through Beethoven's last symphonies. It seems to me that Toscanini hesitates to accept the hypothesis of the three phases of Beethoven's musical style, but that he rather looks on the nine symphonies as a continuous advance, each composition adding a stone to the structure that Beethoven ascends to storm the very heavens from which he hurled that thunderbolt which is the Ninth Symphony.

What need one say of Toscanini's Beethoven interpretations? Under his baton the nine symphonies are precisely what they should be: the nine most profound poems in all music—the human documents of a superhuman spirit. Beethoven approaches Dante, Michelangelo, Shakspeare. What Victor Hugo said of the Florentine poet might be said of the giant of

symphony: "He strikes at the portals of the infinite."

Toscanini directed all the nine symphonies for the Beethoven centenary as his tribute, the expression of a profound reverence. During that period it seemed as though he wanted to live Beethoven's very life, to hear his secret sorrows, his repressed rages, his aspirations, his surrenders, his dreams fraught with bitter disappointment, his enthusiasm and despair. Toscanini felt all this complex of emotions as he conducted. "Give everything!" he cried to the orchestra. "Give everything you have!"

The Beethoven of Nikisch was majestic, but somewhat aggressive; the Beethoven of Toscanini is human, thoughtful, sorrowful. The one is divine and so unattainable, cloistered, godlike. The other is titan in his boundless lyric impetus, yet he remains close to us, one of us. And that was Beethoven's intention: to achieve humanity in a universal sense. As Dolfus declared, Beethoven summed up in his symphonies the joys and the griefs, the desires and the frustrations, of his age; like Goethe, he stood on the threshold of the century and looked to the future.

The Beethoven cycle was given in four groups:

the First, Second, and Fifth Symphonies on October 7; the Third and Fourth on October 8; the Sixth and Seventh on October 9; the Eighth and Ninth on October 11. Toscanini then yielded to popular demand and conducted the First and Ninth in one closing concert, thus synthesizing twenty-five years of Beethoven's development in technique and thought.

The Teatro Regio of Turin wanted a share in this Beethoven festival, and Toscanini consented to conduct a concert there on October 17. The Ninth brought an ovation such as had never before been heard within those walls. Applause followed Toscanini when he emerged from the building to motor to the special train that was to take him and the orchestra and chorus back to Milan. As indication of the far-flung interest that the performance aroused, it may be mentioned that orders for tickets came even from Paris. One Frenchman, on receiving a telegram to the effect that all seats were sold out, came to the Turin opera-house with a request for standing-room!

Without doubt, only Verdi is Beethoven's rival in Toscanini's affections, and only the Verdi centenary approached the Beethoven centenary in the interest it

MORE SYMPHONY CONCERTS

held for him. On the occasion of the third anniversary of Verdi's death—that is, on February 27, 1904—Toscanini had conducted at the Scala a concert in which the most famous singers took part. In 1913, to mark the centenary of Verdi's birth, he conducted the *Messa di Requiem* and *Falstaff*.

Verdi's melody, which is the amplification of speech itself, his music, which is the exaltation of life itself, move Toscanini immeasurably. But there is another more intimate reason for his admiration for the composer. Italian feeling draws him closer to Verdi than to anyone else, Beethoven excepted. For Beethoven, by his vast sweep, embraces no single country, but the entire world; he alone can be called the universal musician.

That the Italianism of Verdi exceeds the Italianism of any other Italian composer is indicated by the fact that when the whole musical world was deferring to the commands of the "Olympian Jove of Lip-sia," Verdi's staunch old Italian heart could never accept anything not in line with his creed of maintaining in opera its specifically traditional character. Verdi felt that pure imitation of Wagnerian opera

would have given him only the empty shell of music, a rich garment without a body, a flower without scent. Wagner, by breaking through the walls of this material world to widen the sphere of the ideal world, won with his *Parsifal* the right to approach the Holy Grail, to sit at the Holy Communion. But the savour of Verdi's music is quite another thing. Verdi seeks the intensity of immediate experience. As far removed from German mysticism as from Rossinian artificiality, Verdi mirrors life itself with all its joy and depression, with its dreams and its delusions—real life, as we live it, contemporary life tainted with that neuroticism which is our fundamental pathological symptom; all this is the Verdi of *Traviata*.

And Toscanini, too, is Latin; more than that, he is Italian. His own temperament, his intensity, his warmth, are not neutralized by the influence of any school. His eyes can fill with tears at the story of Violetta and Alfredo. Let Hanslick say what he will. Opera will not die while there is yet alive an interpreter to make us feel the analogy between certain harmonies, certain musical phrases, and the speech or situations on the stage. The classic drama was based

MORE SYMPHONY CONCERTS

on this analogy; the character assumed an affected voice, he exaggerated the ordinary intonations of the voice, he declaimed and did not speak. And today we have a form of phrasing which is obtained simply by an exaggeration of the intonation of speech: recitative. Thus the opera is not so artificial as some would have us think. The same word, with a different accent, changes its character and expression. The efficacy and potency of music lie in this, that it is the expression we call speech, but speech intensified, heightened in tone.

Toscanini realized that in Beethoven's work there is a certain *pathos* (in the Greek sense of the word), a declamatory tone reminiscent of Rousseau, Byron, Schiller. This is apparent in the recitatives in the Ninth Symphony as Toscanini renders them. Beethoven himself wanted his sonatas to be "declaimed" (see Opus 31, number 2). That great master knew he had expressed not only sounds, but ideas, emotions.

After the opening of the operatic season at the Scala on November 14, 1926, with *Don Carlos*, Toscanini sailed for the third time to America on Decem-

ber 29. His wife and two children accompanied him. This time he left behind him, at the Scala, Pietro Mascagni, who had been invited to conduct his *Iris* there.

Toscanini could not conduct the two concerts he was to have given with the Philharmonic Orchestra on January 11, 1927. The Roumanian conductor Georgesco substituted for him. Toscanini was in a state of nervous depression, perhaps as a result of a slight case of bronchitis dating from the crossing. His physician had advised a long rest, and although Toscanini had not planned to leave for Italy till February 12, he considered sailing on January 29 instead. But he was caught up with his passionate admiration for Beethoven. It was 1927. How could he allow the centenary to pass by without a note? How could he leave without once interpreting Beethoven for the American public?

Americans were bewailing a lost opportunity which they had awaited for an entire year. Suddenly, a concert was announced for February 1, and Toscanini led the first of his Beethoven concerts at the Metro-

MORE SYMPHONY CONCERTS

politan Opera-house. The opera-house took on the air of a gala event. The ovation that greeted Toscanini as he stepped on to the rostrum lasted over five minutes! The acclaim burst forth again after the performance of the *Eroica* and the Fifth Symphony, a tribute to magnificent precision and clarity of style, to amazing eloquence of interpretation. To paraphrase the *New York Times*—which had declared, the year before, that only Toscanini should play Beethoven—there is only one Beethoven, and Toscanini is his prophet.

On February 3 Mr. Clarence Mackay, president of the Philharmonic Society, announced that, owing to the limited capacity of Carnegie Hall, Toscanini's two concerts on February 5 and 6 would be broadcast by radio so that all America might hear the Beethoven Ninth as conducted by Toscanini and performed by the Philharmonic Orchestra, members of the Schola Cantorum, and soloists, among them Elizabeth Rethberg and Louise Homer of the Metropolitan Opera company. It is unnecessary to describe the unforgettable ovation paid to Toscanini. The Philharmonic board of trustees presented him with a laurel

wreath and a sheaf of roses, as well as a commemorative medal. On this occasion Toscanini signed a five-year contract.

Toscanini had led this brief Beethoven cycle while he was weak, feverish. The inevitable reaction came suddenly. He left hurriedly, cancelling all engagements. The peaceful crossing home restored him.

Another proof of American admiration awaited him. A cablegram from New York to the *Corriere della Sera* on March 27 announced that the Philharmonic Society and the New York Symphony Society had decided to consolidate under the name of the Philharmonic-Symphony Society of New York. Arturo Toscanini was to be its principal conductor, and the choice of musicians was to be entrusted to him. Among the guest conductors were to be Willem Mengelberg and Walter Damrosch. This amalgamation had as its purpose the formation of an orchestra second to none, self-supporting, not dependent on the generosity of wealthy supporters. Those who promoted this step wished above all to bring within the range of students and the general public the best in orchestral music. They planned to build a concert hall

MORE SYMPHONY CONCERTS

to take the place of Carnegie Hall, which, before long, will become too small. The new society, as part of its educational program, intended to extend the musical season by giving a number of concerts at popular prices. The chairman of the board of directors of the new organization was to be Mr. Clarence H. Mackay; Mr. Otto Kahn was to be one of its vice-presidents.

And so Toscanini is to divide his activity between the Scala, the centre of operatic music in Italy, and the new Philharmonic-Symphony Society in New York, the centre of concert music in America.

APPENDIX



APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Works Performed at the Turin Exposition

<i>Composers</i>	<i>Compositions</i>	<i>Perform- ances</i>
Bazzini	Overture to the tragedy <i>Saul</i> ..	1
Beethoven	<i>Leonore</i> overture, No. 3	2
“	<i>Coriolanus</i> overture	2
“	<i>Egmont</i> overture	2
“	Symphony No. 1, in C major	1
“	Symphony No. 3, in E flat ma- jor (<i>Eroica</i>)	2
“	Symphony No. 5, in C minor ..	2
“	Symphony No. 6 (<i>Pastoral</i>) ..	2

APPENDIX

<i>Composers</i>	<i>Compositions</i>	<i>Performances</i>
Beethoven	<i>Andante scherzo</i> from the Ninth Symphony	1
Berlioz	<i>Carnaval romain</i> (<i>Roman Carnival</i>) (overture)	2
“	March from the <i>Fantastic Symphony</i>	1
“	Hungarian March, and Dance of the Sylphs, from <i>The Damnation of Faust</i>	1
“	<i>Queen Mab</i> (Scherzo)	3
Bizet	<i>L'Arlésienne Suite</i>	1
Bolzoni	<i>Dramatic Suite</i>	1
“	Theme and Variations (for strings)	1
“	<i>The Mediæval Castle</i>	1
Brahms	Second Symphony	2
“	Fourth Symphony	2
“	<i>Hungarian Dances</i> , Nos. 5 and 6.	3
Bruch	Concerto in G minor, for violin and orchestra	1
Catalani	Dance of the Undines from <i>Loreley</i>	3
“	<i>A Sera</i> (<i>At Evening</i>) (for strings)	1
“	Prelude to Act IV of the opera <i>Dejanice</i>	1
“	Prelude to Act II of the opera <i>La Wally</i>	2

APPENDIX

<i>Composers</i>	<i>Compositions</i>	<i>Perform- ances</i>
Celega	<i>The Heart of Fingal</i> (symphonic poem)	2
“	<i>The Enchantment</i> (symphonic suite)	2
Cherubini	Overture to the opera <i>Faniska</i> ..	2
“	Overture to <i>Medea</i>	2
“	Scherzo from String Quartet in E flat	1
Cimarosa	Overture to <i>The Secret Marriage</i>	2
Cowen	A Night on the Fjord, from the <i>Scandinavian Symphony</i>	1
D'Indy	<i>The Enchanted Forest</i>	1
Dvořák	<i>New World Symphony</i>	2
“	Symphonic Variations	2
“	<i>Karneval</i> overture	1
“	<i>Othello</i> overture	2
Faccio	Funeral March from the opera <i>Hamlet</i>	1
Ferrara	<i>Adagio</i> and <i>Allegretto</i> (for strings)	1
Foroni	Overture in C minor	1
“	Overture in A major	2
Franchetti	Nocturne from Act II of <i>Colombo</i>	2
Franck	Intermezzo from <i>The Redemption</i>	3
Fuchs	Overture	1
Goldmark	Dance from the suite <i>The Rustic Wedding</i>	1

APPENDIX

<i>Composers</i>	<i>Compositions</i>	<i>Performances</i>
Goldmark	Second Prelude from <i>The Queen of Sheba</i>	2
“	Overture to the tragedy <i>Sappho</i> ..	2
“	Overture to <i>Prometheus Bound</i>	1
Gomez	Duet from the opera <i>Fosca</i>	1
Grieg	Second <i>Peer Gynt Suite</i>	3
“	<i>First Meeting</i> (for strings)	1
“	<i>Saltarello</i> (for strings)	3
Handel	<i>Largo</i>	1
Haydn	Fourth Symphony	1
“	<i>Adagio</i> from Quartet in C	1
Humperdinck	Prelude to <i>Hänsel und Gretel</i> ..	2
Lalo	<i>Norwegian Rhapsody</i>	1
Lassen	<i>Fest Overture</i>	2
Liszt	<i>Hungarian Rhapsody</i>	1
“	<i>Les Préludes</i>	1
“	<i>Mephisto Waltz</i>	1
Mancinelli	Cantata	1
“	Suite for <i>Tristan und Isolde</i>	2
“	Barcarola for the drama <i>Cleopatra</i>	1
“	Flight of the Lovers, from <i>Scene Veneziane</i>	3
Martucci	Concerto in B flat minor (piano and orchestra)	1
“	Symphony in D minor	1
Massenet	<i>Les Érinnyes</i>	3
“	<i>Neapolitan Scenes</i>	1

APPENDIX

<i>Composers</i>	<i>Compositions</i>	<i>Perform- ances</i>
Massenet	<i>Sous les Tilleulles (Under the Linden-trees)</i>	1
"	<i>Le Dernier Sommeil de la Vierge (Last Sleep of the Virgin)</i> ..	1
Mendelssohn	<i>Midsummer Night's Dream over- ture</i>	1
"	<i>Scherzo</i>	2
"	<i>Nocturne</i>	1
"	<i>Meeresstille und Glückliche Fahrt (overture)</i>	1
"	<i>Canzonetta from Quartet in E flat (for strings)</i>	1
"	<i>Concerto in E minor, for violin</i> ..	1
Morlacchi	<i>Overture from Francesca da Rimini</i>	1
Mozart	<i>Symphony in A major</i>	1
"	<i>Overture from The Magic Flute</i>	1
Orefice	<i>Forest Symphony</i>	1
Paganini	<i>Perpetual Motion (violins alone)</i>	2
Paisiello	<i>Overture from Nina Pazzo per amore</i>	1
Ponchielli	<i>Overture from the opera I Lituani (The Lithuanians)</i>	1
"	<i>Fourth Prelude from Marion De- lorme</i>	1
Raff	<i>Excerpts from the quartet The Pretty Miller-Girl</i>	1

APPENDIX

<i>Composers</i>	<i>Compositions</i>	<i>Performances</i>
Raff	Excerpts from the symphony <i>In the Woods</i>	2
Rimsky-Korsakov	Part Two of the suite <i>Scheherazade</i>	1
Rossini	Overture from <i>William Tell</i>	4
“	Overture from <i>The Thieving Magpie</i>	1
Saint-Saëns	Symphony in C minor	3
“	<i>Danse Macabre</i>	1
“	An Evening in Blidah (from <i>Algerian Suite</i>)	1
Schubert	Unfinished Symphony	2
“	Hungarian March	1
Schumann	Fourth Symphony	2
“	<i>Evening Song</i> (arranged by Berlioz)	1
Sgambati	Concerto in G minor (piano and orchestra)	1
“	Serenade, from Symphony in D major	1
Sinigaglia	Scherzo (for strings)	2
“	<i>Hora Mistica</i> (<i>Mystic Hour</i>) (for strings)	1
Smetana	Overture from <i>The Bartered Bride</i> 1	
Stanford	<i>Irish Symphony</i>	1
Svendsen	Fourth Symphony	2
Tschaikowsky	<i>The Tempest</i> (symphonic poem) 1	
“	Overture from <i>Casse-noisette Suite</i> 1	

APPENDIX

<i>Composers</i>	<i>Compositions</i>	<i>Performances</i>
Tschaikowsky	Allegro from the Sixth Symphony	1
Verdi	<i>Stabat Mater</i>	3
“	<i>Laudi alla Vergine</i>	3
“	<i>Te Deum</i>	3
“	Overture from <i>La Forza del Des-</i> <i>tino</i>	1
“	Overture from <i>I Vespri Siciliani</i>	2
“	Trio from <i>I Lombardi</i>	1
Wagner	Prelude to Act I, <i>Lohengrin</i>	3
“	Prelude to <i>Parsifal</i>	1
“	<i>Tannhäuser</i> overture	3
“	Prelude to <i>Die Meistersinger</i>	2
“	<i>Rienzi</i> overture	1
“	Overture to <i>Der Fliegende Hol-</i> <i>länder</i>	1
“	Death of Isolde from <i>Tristan und</i> <i>Isolde</i>	2
“	Forest Voices from <i>Siegfried</i> ..	3
“	Magic Fire music from <i>Die Wal-</i> <i>küre</i>	3
“	Siegfried's Voyage from <i>Götter-</i> <i>dämmerung</i>	2
“	Ride of the Valkyries from <i>Die</i> <i>Walküre</i>	2
“	<i>Faust</i> overture	2
“	Suite for the opera <i>Tristan und</i> <i>Isolde</i> , by L. Mancinelli	2

APPENDIX

<i>Composers</i>	<i>Compositions</i>	<i>Perform- ances</i>
Wagner	The Magic Garden of Klingsor, from <i>Parsifal</i>	2
“	Entrance of the Gods into Val- halla, from <i>Götterdämme- rung</i>	3
Weber	<i>Invitation to the Waltz</i>	2
“	Overture to <i>Euryanthe</i>	1
“	Overture to <i>Freischütz</i>	1
“	Overture to <i>Oberon</i>	1

APPENDIX

APPENDIX B

The works that had their Italian premières under Toscanini at the Scala between 1899 and 1903 were:

Galeotto's *Anton*; February 17, 1900

Mascagni's *Le Maschere*; January 17, 1901

Franchetti's *Germania*; March 11, 1902

Smareglia's *Oceana*; January 22, 1903

Berlioz's *Damnation of Faust*; February 15, 1903

During the same period the works presented for the first time at the Scala were:

Mascagni's *Iris*; January 19, 1899

Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*; January 18, 1902

Puccini's *La Tosca*; February 19, 1900

APPENDIX

Tschaikowsky's *Eugen Onegin*; April 7, 1900

Wagner's *Siegfried*; December 26, 1899

Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*; December 26, 1900

Weber's *Euryanthe*; April 11, 1902

Wagner's *Parsifal* (prelude to Act III only); April 12,
1903

[illegible]

CINCINNATI BIBLE COLLEGE & SEM. LIBRARY
785.0924 T713n
Nicotra, Tobia/Arturo Toscanini main



3 4320 00008 7611

785.092 T713n 1929
Nicotra, Tobia.
Arturo Toscanini.

THE CINCINNATI BIBLE
SEMINARY LIBRARY

A. No. 33620

D. D. No. 785.0924

T 713n

